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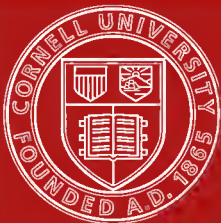
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# **GERMAN MEMORIES**







THE AUTHOR  
From the Portrait by Lenbach







# GERMAN MEMORIES

BY

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"IMPERIAL GERMANY" ETC.

*WITH PORTRAITS*

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## PREFACE

Die Geschichte des Menschen ist sein Character.<sup>1</sup>—GOETHE (WILHELM MEISTER).

MANIFOLD are the roads that lead to Rome, various are the conditions under which we may become acquainted with a foreign land; though I am inclined to doubt whether modern facilities for travel have increased the number of those who penetrate beneath the surface of another country, let alone their own. On the other hand, with the growing complexity of the inter-relationship of national interests and ideas, it is becoming more difficult every day to gauge the road we ourselves are travelling without possessing some knowledge of what is taking place—germinating, ripening—outside our own doors.

The travelling potentate, greeted by cheering crowds and deputations, welcomed by a generous Press, is delighted with the *simulacra* of Potemkin villages, whereas the penniless emigrant confronts the grim realities of life. The tourist sees just as much as his limited opportunities may bring within his ken, and, unless endowed with a gift of observation, at all times rare, assimilates, in a whole lifetime, little worth recording. This is more especially the case with those in whom the conservative instincts bred of a powerful civilisation of their own country leave little receptivity for foreign customs and ideas. Thus we find Frenchmen and Englishmen residing for years in other lands without being affected by or taking the slightest interest in their character or institutions. Many years ago I met a lady whose husband often appeared on London platforms

<sup>1</sup> "The history of man is his character."

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as a champion of popular causes—interests which she herself was supposed to share. She spoke of Germany and her visits to that country, so I ventured to inquire as to her connections and acquaintances in the Fatherland. To my surprise she replied huskily in a half whisper: “The Court! The Court!”

The case is different where intimate relations with the inner life of a foreign country and the receipt of many benefits, intellectual and social, have had a share in moulding the mind, broadening our horizon and materially adding to our enjoyment of life. Here our memory must be that of a guest who met with much kindness and gratefully dwells by preference upon the pleasant side of his experiences. This is the frame of mind in which I have written these pages—in the spirit of Goethe’s words: “*Wahrheitsliebe zeigt sich darin, dass man überall das Gute zu finden und zu schätzen weiss.*”<sup>1</sup>

The following pages embody memories of Germany from boyhood down to the present day, a period of over fifty years. They are intended as a supplement and sequel to my previous work, and will, I hope, form a further sympathetic contribution to the knowledge of that country.

Circumstances—early education, followed by extensive business relations during a number of years; authorship, and finally journalism—have, I think, afforded me exceptional facilities for viewing German life from almost every aspect. Indeed, there can hardly be a class, high or low, with representatives of which I have not come in contact at one time or another. Some of these were distinguished men whose names are inscribed in the national annals of fame. Others less remarkable—some of humble station—have afforded me many opportunities for obtaining an insight into the inner life of the people.

My relations with Prince Bismarck and his family form the subject of a separate publication,<sup>2</sup> to which I need only

<sup>1</sup> “The love of truth shows itself in our endeavour to seek out everywhere that which is good and to appreciate it.”

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck*, by Sidney Whitman, 1902. London, John Murray; Appleton, New York; Union Verlag, Stuttgart.

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make reference in order to give a clue to some of the experiences hereafter related. Several of my visits to Germany during the years 1891-8 were the outcome of invitations from the Bismarck family, and some of my most valuable acquaintanceships were due to this connection. I was the Prince's guest at Friedrichsruh on two of his birthdays, notably his eightieth, in 1895, which called forth a public demonstration the recollection of which can never fade from the memory of those who were privileged to take part in it. But the most important result of the Bismarck connection to me was that it led to my embarking on the broad waters of journalism.

One evening in the autumn of 1894 I was dining with Count Herbert Bismarck at the house of Baron Deichmann, in London, when the former suggested that I should accompany him to The Hague, where he was about to pay a visit to his sister and her husband, Count Rantzau, who was at that time German Minister at the Dutch capital. On my replying that I could not leave London on account of business to which I had to attend, he blurted out in his jovial way: "What can a man like you have to do with business! You ought to take up political journalism; that would be a far more congenial occupation for you. I will mention it to Gordon Bennett."

Some weeks afterwards I received a letter from the proprietor of the *New York Herald* asking me to go to Paris to see him. I did so, and in due course became correspondent of that paper in London. In the following three years I represented the *Herald* on different occasions in Berlin, Vienna, Constantinople, and Macedonia. I also took part in a like capacity in an expedition sent by the Sultan to Asiatic Turkey in the winter of 1897-8. On my return from the East Mr. Bennett suggested that I should go permanently to Berlin as chief correspondent of the *New York Herald*. This proposal I declined, as I did not wish to leave London. Seven years later, in the autumn of 1905, Mr. Bennett induced me to go to Moscow during the Revolution, and thence

## P R E F A C E

on to Berlin during the Algeciras Conference in the spring of 1906.

In dealing with these and other experiences, as far as they come within the scope of this volume, I have endeavoured to portray something of more than passing interest. If in so doing I have unduly accentuated the irrepressible "ego" it was because I should have been unable to give the requisite actuality to my story by adopting any other form of narration.

The opening chapters treat of the conditions prevailing in Germany fifty years ago, and form a background to the main body of the book.

S. W.

La mémoire des hommes n'est qu'un  
imperceptible trait du sillon que chacun  
de nous laisse au sein de l'infini. Elle  
n'est pas cependant chose vaine.

ERNEST RENAN



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## CHAPTER I

### SCHOOL MEMORIES

It is said that as we grow older the memories of our youth—those that often exercise a lasting influence on our lives—grow more vivid, whilst we are apt to forget recent events. Thus my first impressions of Germany, beginning in the summer of the year 1859, stand out before me in bold relief: the Rhine with its picturesque castles, its vineyards, open and unprotected from pilferers; the carriage road from Biebrich to Wiesbaden lined with apple and plum trees; the villas, the gardens full of fruit-trees with no brick walls or fences to protect them; the forests of the Taunus range—not enclosed, but free and open to all to roam through; Wiesbaden an idyl of comeliness, where all classes mingled in the Kurgarten to listen to the military band—princes and monarchs occasionally among the crowd, without anybody running after them or molesting them—many excellent hotels at moderate prices; a municipal theatre at which you could see Ristori, the great tragedienne, one night, and hear Mozart's "Figaro" the next, with Carl Formes, the renowned basso-profundo, as the immortal Barber; and the market-place with bright-faced peasants from the neighbourhood, selling fruit and vegetables. Decency, decorum, and cleanliness were in evidence everywhere. These were sights to leave enduring impressions upon a London-born boy, who had hitherto only seen the Thames from Richmond to Greenwich and Gravesend, and visited a watering-place on the English south coast. They have clung to me through life, and in a measure account for my sympathy with a country where such conditions prevail. Everything I have written about Germany has been more or less coloured by them. I

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had imbibed a strong partiality for the study of history from my father, and already took a keen interest in the political situation. It was just after the Franco-Italian War, which had ended in a triumph for France, and the political outlook was not favourable for Germany. Yet even in those days I had a presentiment that a great future was in store for that country.

We stayed a few days at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. A crusty old gentleman with hard, clean-cut features, thin lips, wide mouth, and sparse bristling hair and whiskers sat at the *table d'hôte* of the Hotel d'Angleterre. He had a good appetite, and the waiters seemed to take pleasure in piling the dishes in front of him, after they had been served round, when he glared at them with a pair of remarkably fine, piercing eyes. My father said to me: "Take note, my boy, of that man! When you grow up you will hear of him as a great thinker." He was Arthur Schopenhauer. He died in the following year, and when I came to Frankfort again his portrait in oils hung on the wall opposite the spot at which he used to sit every day for many years.

My parents wished their children to learn German, so it was decided to put me, as the eldest, to school in Germany. A friend of my father's had a son at the famous Vitzthum Gymnasium at Dresden, and there I was placed as a boarder in the autumn of 1859, at the age of eleven, among strangers, without knowing as much as three consecutive words of the German language. The Vitzthum Gymnasium was an institution devoted to the gratuitous education of members of the noble family of that name, and was founded in the year 1638. The Blochmann Institute was amalgamated with it in the year 1828, and the two together enjoyed a high reputation far beyond the boundaries of Germany. Perhaps this was owing to the fact that the founder of the latter, Carl Justus Blochmann (1786-1857), had studied under the renowned Pestalozzi, and that the school was supposed to be carried on according to the principles of this far-famed Swiss pedagogue. Physical culture, as part of the

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formation of character, was one of these, and at that time this was an educational novelty. The school certainly possessed a cosmopolitan character, for it included boys from the United States, France, England, Denmark, Austria, Russia, and Roumania, the latter in those days consisting of the Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia).

The German system of education fifty years ago was of a more Spartan kind than that of either France or England, and nowhere was discipline stricter than among the upper classes. It was not for nothing that both Bismarck and Moltke remembered their school-days with repugnance. Of the former it is on record that when he went out walking with his schoolfellows the tears would come into his eyes at the sight of a plough, which reminded him of home; Moltke never shook off the hardening effects of his early years. Still, I am inclined to doubt whether things were anywhere quite so rigorous as at the Vitzthum Gymnasium in the years in which I belonged to it. At least it is tolerably certain that the German police would not tolerate conditions in a plain *Volkschule* to-day such as prevailed in the Vitzthum Gymnasium in Dresden in my time, where the sons of the nobility of Saxony, Prussia, and Mecklenburg—even scions of reigning houses—were educated.

Sleeping accommodation was of the most primitive, not to say of an almost barbaric description, in every way inferior to that which I have since seen among the Russian soldiers in their barracks. In the winter the water was frozen in the jugs, so we had to go without washing, for no hot water was supplied. We were called up at 5 A.M. in the summer and at six in the winter. Exactly half an hour was allowed from the time of being first called to appear downstairs to claim the meagre fare which figured as breakfast, a cup of thin coffee and a piece of dry white bread (*Semmel*), the cost of which was exactly three pfennige, or one-third of a penny in English money. With the stroke of the half-hour, however, both coffee-bearer and bread distributor vanished from the scene. There was no breakfast for late-comers, and not a mouthful

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to eat until a quarter to ten, when another variety of white roll—this time supposed to be covered with butter—was distributed among the boys in the playground. The day pupils put in an appearance at seven o'clock in the summer and at eight in the winter, and many a time have I waited at the gate to catch sight of two English boys of the name of Sawyer who usually brought some rolls in their pocket, which they distributed to the famished boarders.

The dinner consisted of soup, drawn from stringy beef of inferior quality, which was served up afterwards with vegetables; occasionally veal took the place of beef. Such was the unappetising character of this meat that I have never since been able to touch veal. The Sunday dinner was a banquet in comparison, for it comprised a single helping of rostbraten (braised beef) and vegetables, followed by a slice of cake. Dry rolls were again handed us at tea-time. The supper, taken at eight o'clock, was sometimes a smoked herring, or a few slices of cervelat or liver sausage. Many times have I slunk off hungry to bed rather than sit down to this apology for a repast. Altogether the food was such as a Munich cab-driver would reject; but, poor as was the feast, it must be stated in fairness that it was partaken of by one and all, the headmaster and his family included. But a further degree of privation formed part of the school curriculum.

The punishment inflicted on the boys even for the slightest breach of discipline was the deprivation of meals, with regard to which a regular scale of penalties existed. Thus, for boys of the higher classes a standing punishment was that of being locked up so many hours, sometimes for a whole day, in an empty school-room with bread and water. To be deprived of one's dinner or supper was a common occurrence, a penalty which, according to the disposition of the master could be inflicted simply for exchanging a word with another boy during class time, let alone for obstinacy, disobedience or more serious offences. The *modus operandi* was as follows. When the dinner-bell had rung, and the boys had already taken their seats at the dinner or supper table, as the case might be, an



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usher came in, and, walking round the different tables with a note-book in hand, notified to the different boys who had incurred punishment that they were only allowed to partake of bread and water. In some instances the indignity of standing up during dinner was added to the penalty. I have known a French boy of an exceptionally unruly disposition named Cogniet to be deprived of his dinner every other day of the week, and to have scarcely had his Sunday dinner once in a whole term. The only limitation to this cruel mode of punishment was that the rules of the school forbade a boy to be deprived of his dinner two days running. And as the Sunday meal was the only one in the week to which we looked forward, and the deprivation of which was keenly felt by us all, we were only too glad to incur the penalty of going without our Saturday dinner, as we were thereby at all events assured of our Sunday dinner.

The sanitary conditions of the school were of a most primitive character. Not a single bath was there for over a hundred boarders; in the summer, it is true, the boys bathed daily in the Elbe; but in the winter, a tiny lavatory, fitted up with a Russian vapour apparatus, was all the accommodation provided for the washing of the sons of some of the best families of the country. Once a fortnight two soldiers from the adjoining Garde Reiter barracks were called in to rub the boys down after their steaming. With little or no ventilation the primitive sanitary arrangements spread such a loathsome smell throughout the sunless building that I can only wonder to-day how epidemics were not chronic among us.

The inspector came round during the dinner hour once a week to distribute the pocket-money among the pupils; it consisted of debased silver coins, nearly black with dirt. The regular amount was sixpence; some few of the pupils by special arrangement received a shilling, which was the largest sum permitted. It was against the rules for a boy to have any money beyond the pocket allowance in his possession. Some few had no pocket money at all, members of the Vitzthum family being in this category; others had no

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holidays throughout the year, so that their school memories in after life must have been as though they had passed their youth in what was little better than a penitentiary, no boarder being allowed to leave the school unless in the company of a master. It will be readily understood that such a rigorous system nearly broke a weak character, whilst it tended to harden those who were strong enough to bear up against it. I remember when I first went there from a luxurious English home I used to cry myself to sleep at night for weeks at a time. After a life of many vicissitudes, rich in joy and sorrow, I can say that nothing that has happened to me in after years has ever given me such a thrill of ecstatic joy as I experienced when one day I was called up before the head-master and curtly informed that my father had arrived from England and I was at liberty to go to the hotel to see him. Yet such were the conditions under which many of the men were brought up who supplied the officers to an army which within five years laid Austria and France in the dust.

It will readily, I think, be believed that it required a strong infusion of romance to be able to look back with affection on a time associated with so many privations; for to boys nurtured under English conditions deprivation of liberty, let alone the execrable food, embodied hardship of no mean order. And yet for many of us a deal of romance was undoubtedly connected with our stay at the Vitzthum Gymnasium, more particularly so among the German and Austrian elements.

The Italian War of 1859 was just over when I joined the school, and the German boys imbibed their sympathies with regard to it direct from their homes. There was a strong partisanship for the Austrians—notably the Tyrolese, whose sharp-shooters were said to have picked off the French officers at Magenta and Solferino. Altogether there existed a chivalrous feeling of kinship with Austria among the boys, many of whom still looked to the Kaiserstadt (Vienna), rather than to Berlin, as the metropolis of their race. Austrian boys who had belonged to the school included young Wüllersdorf, the son of the Austrian admiral who had command

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of the Austrian Novara expedition round the world (1857-9)—in those days a sensational feat, which, to the youthful mind as I knew it then, redounded to the credit of the German race. Young Wüllersdorf was looked upon as the son of a national hero, as a son of Admiral Tegethoff might have been regarded some years later had it not been that by that time the war of 1866 had brought about a cleavage in the feelings of the two great branches of the Germanic family.

A feature of the school, as well as of that particular period, was the admiration for England and everything English, which prevailed everywhere. The battle of Waterloo was then scarcely more remote than is the surrender of Sedan to-day, and the English enjoyed in this respect a similar *prestige* to that with which the Germans have been invested since 1870. The prize fight between Heenan and Sayers took place at Farnborough about this time, and was discussed among the young in Germany very much in the same spirit in which the encounter between Hector and Achilles is regarded. It was tacitly admitted that only England could have produced such a hero as the Sussex bricklayer, Tom Sayers. Admiration was further aroused by the great popularity of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, especially "Ivanhoe." The figure of Richard Cœur de Lion, attuned to music in Marschner's "Templar and Jewess," provided an English hero whose prowess was re-echoed from every German opera stage in the stirring air beginning with the words:

Du stolzes England freue Dich  
Dein Richard hoch und ritterlich.<sup>1</sup>

The English peer, the "Milord," was the supreme embodiment of wealth and dignity.

Of far more importance, however, than these influences were the great English names in science and mechanical invention which were constantly before us in the course of lectures on chemistry and physics, given in a special laboratory fitted up with every appliance for illustrations by practical experiments.

<sup>1</sup> "Rejoice, proud England, o'er thy knightly King Richard."

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The epoch-making German and French discoveries, the American inventions of the second half of the nineteenth century, had yet to be made. Thus most of the leading names connected with science or mechanics were those of Englishmen: Harvey and Jenner, Priestley and Faraday, Watt and Stephenson, Wheatstone and Cooke, were the pioneers of scientific progress, and the nation which had produced them excited boundless admiration. Another feature which tended to emphasise English superiority was the inferior quality of many German goods at that time when compared with English. Anything that came from England was on this account alone sure to be considered superior, and indeed was so in many cases—for instance: cutlery, skates, leather goods, clothes, silk goods, guns, writing materials, such as paper, pens and pencils, sealing-wax, chemists' specialities, &c. The phrase "Made in Germany" was not yet current, but the mere word "English" applied to any article whatsoever was a sufficient warrant of its supreme quality.

Ample opportunity was afforded us in our little cosmopolitan world to observe certain idiosyncrasies of national character which I have had manifold occasions to verify in after life. The Russians, including members of the aristocratic families of Czartorisky, Galitzin, Maximowitch, and Stolypin, as well as the Roumanians (in those days Wallachians and Moldavians), among whom were the Princes Stourdzia and Souza, evinced as boys the same characteristics which I have since often observed in them. They were impatient under restraint, passionate, more or less inclined to eccentricity, extravagance, and oriental love of finery. Prince Souza, a dark, full-bearded, swarthy young fellow, when he got leave to go into the town, used to borrow of me a silk cravat and a gold pin which my father had given me, and would wear them as his own. The school numbered among its pupils sons of many noble German families, and of these were some of the most powerfully built youths I have ever met, although in those days the cultivation of sport and games as we know them now, as distinct from systematic physical training, was

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practically unheard of; of games, a variety of American baseball was about the only speciality indulged in. Yet, although an admiration of physical strength and pluck was quite a cult among us, during the whole of the time I was in Dresden I cannot recall a single instance of what is known in England as "bullying." I do not remember a case in which the strong among us abused their power by striking or exacting humiliating service from smaller boys. Many years afterwards I met one whose physical force was a school tradition in my time—Major von Mutius, of the Prussian Garde du Corps. He was one of the German officers who entered Sedan with a flag of truce on the day of surrender—a giant in stature. Once, when shooting with him in Silesia, I reminded him of his schoolboy reputation for physical prowess, and he told me in reply that it had been a source of satisfaction to him in after life to look back upon the time when as a boy he had used his strength only to protect the weak. He, too, alas! although not much older than myself, has long passed away.

A strict code of honour prevailed among the boys. In case of quarrels a regular challenge to pugilistic encounter was given, accepted, and fought out either on the spot or later by appointment, and although the noble art of self-defence as practised in Anglo-Saxon countries was not scientifically taught or well understood, the great physical strength and high courage prevalent, particularly among the older boys, made these encounters by no means trivial affairs. They were fought out until one side admitted defeat. I have seen boys who had been through a fight whose faces were battered almost beyond recognition. The punishment for such severe breaches of discipline was incarceration on bread and water, but etiquette imposed silence on all sides with regard to these combats. The small boys looked up with wonder to the fighters in the light of Homeric heroes. A fight which in my time held the premier position in the traditions of the school was one which had taken place before I had joined, between a Wallachian named Gregoriady and an English youth named Mills, from Lancashire. The latter had

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left the school before I entered it, but Gregoriady, a black-bearded Roumanian, rather short, but of enormous muscular power, was still a pupil. He was always practising at the parallel and horizontal bars, and the hulging-out muscles of his arms and shoulders, like those of a circus athlete, were the admiration of us all. The story went that Gregoriady, in the arrogance of his might, had intentionally provoked a quarrel with the English boy. One morning matters came to a crisis in the breakfast-room. The Englishman, although not so muscular, was a far cleverer fighter, and handled his Wallachian opponent so severely that the floor was bespattered with blood before the fight could be stopped. Gregoriady was battered almost beyond recognition, and was obliged to take to his bed before his features resumed their normal appearance, whilst the English boy was hardly marked. The story was familiar to every boy in the school, but such was the delicacy of feeling prevalent that it was never afterwards referred to in the presence of the defeated champion. Defeat did not expose to ridicule, much less did it imply dishonour, among these sons of continental patricians. True to the best German traditions, there was always respect for an antagonist.

Speaking from memory, I can say that the English, French and Roumanians were the most quarrelsome. The Germans were the most peaceable, although, as regards physical strength, their élite, von Mutius, Stein, and the two brothers Stumpfheldt, were by far the doughtiest pupils of the school. Indeed, the tradition of their prowess lived on long after they had left. Altogether, there was something of the Siegfried nature in these sturdy Teutons of gigantic build. They would keep away from the rest of the school in their free time, and seek that solitude among the trees which the poets associate with the reveries of young German manhood. None of these strong Germans ever to my knowledge ill-used a small boy; indeed, the awe they inspired often prevented big boys of other nationalities from indulging their own innate bullying propensities.

The Napoleonic legend still had a strong hold over the

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imagination of the young, as well as the older generation of Saxons in those days. Several of the boys were the sons or grandsons of Saxon officers, who had served in Napoleon's campaigns. There was one of my own age at the College, von Almer by name, who boasted a huge telescope, which he told us his father had carried across the Beresina in the retreat from Russia.

An old Saxon General von Zetteritz used to dine at the table-d'hôte of the Stadt Berlin; he had been through the Russian campaign of 1812 with Napoleon, and was among those who crossed the Beresina with the French fugitives. As, with his long, flowing white beard, he stood up looking round the dining-room, it was as if a vision of that dire catastrophe had risen before us. And yet he was an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon. I remember also an old Count Holtzendorf, who used to limp about the streets of Dresden leaning on a stick. He wore the Cross of the Legion of Honour, conferred upon him by Napoleon III. in memory of his loyal conduct at the battle of Leipzig, when, as a young Saxon lieutenant, he refused to join his countrymen who went over to the Allies on that memorable occasion. He remained true to his Sovereign who fought on the side of Napoleon and was taken prisoner. Years afterwards, when the Saxon King, restored to his dominions, passed out of his palace in Dresden and saw young Holtzendorf on guard duty, he would make a point of raising his hat to him as a tribute of respect for his fidelity to his Sovereign in adversity.

On our Sunday walks we would go to the heights of Räcknitz, where, shaded by trees, a granite block was to be seen, surmounted by a huge Grecian helmet in bronze, bearing the inscription, "Here fell the hero Moreau." This was in memory of the French General of that name, the victor of Hohenlinden (1799), who in 1813 fought on the side of the Allies against Napoleon, and was killed at the battle of Dresden on the 27th of August in that year, struck by a cannon ball whilst standing close to the Emperor Alexander. It was said that Napoleon himself pointed the gun which fired the fatal shot.

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By far the most pleasing features of the school—probably due to the teaching of Pestalozzi—were the Whitsuntide and summer walking tours, undertaken by the boys in charge of the masters. At Whitsuntide these jaunts lasted about ten days, and in the summer between three and four weeks, when the itinerary was extended as far as Switzerland, and even into Northern Italy, and all this at an incredibly small cost. I can recall a trip lasting ten days, the amount debited to the account of each pupil scarcely exceeding £2. These tours were looked forward to with delight, and discussed by the boys weeks, even months, ahead. When the day came, and pigskin knapsacks were distributed all round, and we started for the railway station, it was a scene of great excitement. Once clear of the neighbourhood of Dresden the walking began, the distance covered being from eighteen to twenty miles a day. Sometimes farmers' waggons were hired, in case the road should prove to be too long for the stragglers, the weaker among the boys. It occasionally happened that a town chosen for a halt for the night did not possess an inn large enough to harbour between thirty or forty new arrivals. In such cases a shakedown on straw, in some concert or assembly room, which almost every German village contains—even churches figured among our resting-places—would do duty for the occasion, with a wash in the morning at the fountain in the market-place.

The educational value of these tours lay in the spirit in which they were conducted. As we trudged along the road on a fine spring morning one of the masters would produce a book of German student songs, and with a tuning-fork lead the singing, in which all joined with effect, as the training of the voice, as well as gymnastics, dancing, and fencing, belonged to the regular school curriculum. The masters in charge were usually well versed in geography, geology, mineralogy, botany, and other natural sciences, and drew the boys' attention to such facts as would be likely to quicken their interest and increase their knowledge. The varied and attractive nature of the Saxon scenery, forest-clad

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hills, and valleys with limpid streams, lent itself admirably to such a purpose. The journey was mapped out so as to touch as many points of interest as possible on the route chosen. Thus, in passing Bautzen, the victory of Napoleon in 1813 became the theme of interest and instruction; at Hochkirk, the defeat of Frederick the Great. From Zittau we crossed over the frontier into Bohemia and visited the far-famed castle of Friedland, once the property of Wallenstein, of Thirty Years War renown. Museums, town-halls, and old châteaux were visited, and their characteristics explained. Now and then we were entertained at the country seat of some family a member of which was among our fellow pupils. Nor were commerce and industry neglected, although scarcely any of the boys were intended for such a career. A point was made of inspecting notable manufactories on our road, the working of which was explained to the boys. At Tharandt we would visit the Academy of Forestry which has been a model of instruction for the whole world. At Freiberg the working of the silver mines was explained to us. At Chemnitz—the German Manchester, which has quadrupled the number of its inhabitants—it was the cotton mills, and I can distinctly remember being struck by the order and cleanliness of the workpeople. These journeys left a lasting influence on the mind of many of the pupils; stimulating and widening their sympathies and increasing their knowledge, as I can gratefully testify after this lapse of time. They were, besides, a splendid physical training. Altogether physical culture formed a vital part of the curriculum, being a striking contrast to the unhealthy conditions of the school itself; for although, as already stated, competitive games such as football were comparatively neglected, systematic physical culture was carried on as distinct from the present cosmopolitan mania for sport. Gymnastic classes—including fencing—were held regularly in the summer in the open, for part of the playground was reserved for horizontal and parallel bars, wooden horses, jumping boards and other gymnastic apparatus, long before these were introduced into other countries. From

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the playground the boys witnessed through a railing the daily exercises of the Blue Guards in the riding-school immediately adjoining the school, where those of the pupils whose parents wished it took riding-lessons under the tuition of a sergeant for a small charge; this was almost the only extra item of the modest fees, which, including board and tuition, scarcely exceeded those of a daily boarder in a London public school.

The headmaster of the school (called "Rector" or "Director"), Professor Dr. Bezzenberger, was the most typical example of the stern German pedagogue I have ever met. He was, indeed, a distinguished representative of the far-famed German schoolmen; those who for generations past had been the educators of a people which was about to prove itself to be the best-schooled nation in the world. All their energies were devoted to the task they had undertaken, the instruction of youth, the inculcating of that high standard of life in their pupils with which they themselves were imbued. No self-seeking, worldly ambitions, no social vanities warped their energies or took them away from this one supreme object of their lives. Dr. Bezzenberger was truly the embodiment of the highest earthly authority for us all; even the stalwart Germans, Russians and Roumanians quailed when they heard his shrill voice in anger, or when they unexpectedly met his tall spare figure coming along the corridors. These, however, were rare occasions; he was not often visible, and his usual tone of voice was subdued, the words slowly drawn out as if struggling for utterance. In after life, when I first saw Camphausen's picture of Frederick the Great on horseback at the battle of Leuthen, waving his crooked stick, I could understand something of the terror with which he must have inspired his surroundings by finding how much he resembled my old schoolmaster.

He had married the daughter of the famous Blochmann, and thus had inherited the position of his father-in-law as headmaster. Mrs. Bezzenberger was a sweet, womanly apparition, the very antithesis of her imperious lord in temperament. She was kindness itself to the boys when, through illness, they were sent to the school infirmary

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and relegated to her care. She appeared to us roughly treated boys little less than an angel of charity when, with her slight figure and finely cut features, peeping out benevolently from an old-fashioned lace cap, in her soft voice, yet with a certain quiet tone of authority, she would ask what she could do for us. For, unless ill, we were never allowed an opportunity of approaching her or her daughters within speaking distance. We saw her only as she flitted in and out of the dining room, carrying a small housekeeper's reticule, followed by a couple of plain daughters.

After the war of 1866, in passing through Dresden, I called on my old schoolmaster, who had retired into private life; two of his sons, fine specimens of virile Saxon manhood, both of them schoolfellows of mine, had fallen in the war; one was killed at Custozza, fighting as an officer in the Austrian army, the other with the Saxon contingent at Koeniggraetz. Never have I seen such an expression of passionate grief, such implacable resentment in a human face. There could be no reconciliation with the new order of things for such as he. To his thinking, and that of many other Saxons at that time, the action of Prussia was a crime—an enormity not less criminal because crowned with success. There was a trace of antique grandeur about this old man, the evening of whose life was thus blasted, but who, in his stern, imposing personality, has, as far as I know, had no successor.

Many years afterwards, in the autumn of 1903, I received an invitation from the Rector of the Vitzthum Gymnasium to be present in the following January at the inauguration of the new school which was to be taken over henceforth by the Dresden Municipality. I went from England expressly for the purpose, and spent several pleasant days in recalling old times in the company of those who had had a share in them. Nothing, however, brought home to me so vividly the many changes Germany has undergone in the course of the last fifty years as this experience. In the first place, there were only two present of all my former schoolfellows, one of whom was

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General Count Alexander Vitzthum, in command of the Saxon army corps, the XII. of the German army. Many others of my time were dead; twenty-five pupils of the school lost their lives in the wars of 1866 and 1870, an extremely high percentage. The contrast between the dilapidated old college, with its sunless aspect, its dingy quarters and awful smells, about to be demolished, and the beautiful airy and sanitary new structure suggested the enormous material improvements which had taken place in connection with public and private buildings all over Germany, and not least in Dresden. Gloomy streets, even those in which the upper classes lived, and into which a ray of sunlight rarely penetrated, explained the high death-rate prevailing throughout German towns in other days. These have been replaced by rows of palatial buildings, modern residences replete with every comfort of up-to-date life.

So great is the change that, although I had stayed in Dresden on and off for different periods through nearly thirty years, I hardly recognised whole quarters of the town. But even more than the buildings the change in the people impressed me. It embodied the transmutation of a time which had passed, and is not likely to return, even for those who may succeed us. The simple habits, God-fearing sincerity and simplicity, are no longer characteristic of any class of the time we live in. The German upper classes are no longer brought up in that spirit of reverence and frugality which was general fifty years ago. Those that I saw appeared to have become fossilised with the bourgeoisie rising upon the débris. The King (George) was present at the ceremony of inauguration, but his impassive frigidity on an occasion which might well have evoked a few sympathetic words from him was remarked by those present. He might as well have been one of the Chinese mandarin figures in the Royal china collection for all the active part he took in the proceedings. Among persons of distinction the only one who seemed to belong to the present time was the husband of the Queen of Holland—Duke Henry of Mecklenburg, an old Vitzthum scholar. He went round,

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and without any preliminary presentation, whether he knew others or not, shook hands with those who, like himself, had been at the school. After we had listened to a flatulent address to the King, perpetrated by a representative of the Vitzthum family, the Ober-Bürgermeister of Dresden, Geheimer Finanzrat Beutler addressed the assembly, the King included, in a dignified, straightforward speech. It was the utterance of a man who is conscious that he stands for a reality—in his case, the power and worth of the German people; to whom, if I mistake not, rather than to kings and nobles, the decisive word in the future affairs of Germany belongs.

## CHAPTER II

### BEFORE 1870

IF there is one contrast between the Germany of to-day and that of fifty years ago which, next to the altered aspect of German towns, must strike any one, it is the change which has taken place in the economical habits and conditions of the community. Frugality may be said to have been formerly inculcated in the nursery and to have been rigidly practised through life by all classes. That this was so in the matter of the education of the aristocracy is, I think, evident from the contents of the last chapter. But even among reigning families economy was the order of the day. The Empress Augusta was wont to declare that her lack of physical stamina was a result of bad nourishment in her childhood, in which a cheap vegetable known as "skirret" (Schwarzwurz) played a prominent part, and for which she ever afterwards retained a dislike.

Professor Hans Delbrueck, in his *Reminiscences*<sup>1</sup> of the time when he was tutor in the family of the Crown Prince of Prussia, later Emperor Frederick, relates the following characteristic incident. One day at dinner the Crown Princess asked the butler whether the Apollinaris water which she had ordered had come. "Yes, your Imperial Highness," he replied, "but we must first drink the soda water we have in stock." This was going too far even for the good-natured Crown Prince, and he administered a severe rebuke to the man. This took place after the Franco-Prussian War; but for all that the butler's remark

<sup>1</sup> *Persönliche Erinnerungen an den Kaiser Friedrich und sein Haus.* Hans Delbrueck. Berlin, 1888.

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was illustrative of a state of things which had long been prevalent throughout Germany.

Material comforts which were the common property of the well-to-do in France and England were only known to the few in Germany fifty years ago. What was luxury in Paris or London was almost unknown in Berlin, Dresden or Munich. Even after the War of 1870 the installation of some tiled baths in the Hôtel de Rome at Berlin, such as are to be seen everywhere to-day, created quite a sensation and excited the envy of the old Emperor William, for he had nothing like them in his palace. In thousands of families, many of acknowledged social position, roast meat was a rarity seen only once a week, on Sunday's bill of fare. Dinner was almost universally taken in the middle of the day, and consisted of soup and stringy boiled beef, so-called "Suppenfleisch," from which the soup had been taken; supper, of cold odds and ends. Tea and oranges were luxuries.

The traveller who went from England to Dresden, and who smoked a Havana cigar which might have cost sixpence in London, was looked upon in amazement as a millionaire by the local notabilities. The Crown Prince, afterwards King Albert, smoked "weeds" at only three farthings a piece. To-day cigars at half a crown and five shillings each are not unknown at first-class hotels and restaurants, and there are places in Berlin where the wine list exceeds in variety of choice and high prices anything to be met with either in Paris or London.

The railways were in a comparatively backward state. Although the German second-class carriages were even in those days as comfortable as the first in England, there was nothing to compare with the English express service between London, Liverpool, Manchester and Scotland. The journey from Frankfort to Dresden took about eighteen hours: the train went only as far as Leipzig, where the traveller arrived in the night and was obliged to take a ghostly vehicle—a night droschky—and drive from one station to the other; then recline on a bench in a pestilent

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smoking room reeking of stale tobacco, until, after a delay of several hours, a slow train, stopping at every station, took him on to Dresden. On the further journey from Dresden to Lower Silesia the railway went only as far as Goerlitz. There the traveller would put up for the night, starting early in the morning by post, with the whole day before him, to reach his destination in the evening—a mode of travelling little different from that in vogue in previous centuries. Only wealthy people were supposed to travel by “extra post,” a cumbersome arrangement necessitating a change of horses and carriage at every stage of from twelve to fifteen miles. The traveller was compelled to remain in a cold waiting room until all the necessary arrangements were complete—the making out of the “way-bill” for so much per mile and grease for the wheels, “grease money” being charged separately in case—as was expressly stated on the archaic printed form—“the use of such had been actually called for.” Everything bore an exact and official imprimatur, down to the printed bill of fare displayed in the waiting room on which prices for every article were regulated to the half-farthing under Government seal—the Prussian eagle affixed and dated. When everything was ready and the ostler tipped, the postillion would blow his horn as we rumbled over the rough pavement and again on to the high road. As we neared the first toll-bar gate the postillion would again sound his horn, and the gate flew open at the approach of the “Royal Extra Post,” the obligatory toll-tax being already included in the way-bill. Those who could not afford the luxury of the “extra post” were obliged to travel by the ordinary “post,” which started twice daily and lumbered on all night. Horses were changed at every stage, but the passengers remained in the same conveyance. They were packed, herring fashion, in a cumbersome old yellow coach, with all the windows closed; the demand for an open window involving the dreaded possibility of a draught, a noisy altercation, and possibly a challenge to mortal combat—contingencies which are still among the chances of travel in Germany to-day.



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Another vexation of travel was the currency, which varied according to the territory traversed; so that it happened that in the course of a day's journey it changed three or four times from thalers to florins and back again. In Austria the currency consisted of dirty paper money, which, after the War of '66, sank 25 per cent. in value. Prussia could at least boast of possessing a silver coinage of a fairly high standard; but the small silver, the so-called Scheidemünze—which Frederick the Great in his financial stress, had debased beyond recognition as silver—was noted for the layer of black dirt which covered its margin and entirely concealed the Latin inscription of the name of the particular monarch and the obligatory “*Dei Gratia*” by virtue of which he was supposed to rule. This element of dirt was even more conspicuous on the paper money, covering as it did the whole surface of the paper. Fortunately for most of us the microscope and bacteriological science had not then unveiled the unknown terrors of the bacterian world. Thus, on receiving and spending our media of exchange, we were happily unaware that we were handling millions of infectious parasites to the square millimetre and possibly propagating infectious diseases. Gold coins were only in evidence in a money-changer's window, or on the gaming tables of Homburg, Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden. Many people had never seen a gold piece! The name of Frederic-d'Or, as a corollary and an imitation of the French Louis d'Or, survived merely as a figure of speech; horse-dealers sold their horses for so many Frederic-d'Ors, but were paid in the equivalent of thalers and silber-groschen. The only gold coin visible in some parts was the Austrian ducat, and this was explained by a peculiar circumstance. Gold was used in the manufacture of rose-coloured glass, and only the purest was suitable; even British sovereigns were not pure enough for the purpose. The Austrian ducat alone, of all the then existing gold coins in Europe, possessed the requisite standard, but its very purity and consequent softness would have made it a bad medium of exchange.

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The public roads in Prussia, thanks to a paternal Government, were splendid, probably among the best in Europe. The broad, gravel-bedded macadamised chaussée through the Giant Mountains, for instance, with square granite blocks placed at short intervals along the road to prevent carriages from falling over the precipitous ridge into the rushing stream below, was a magnificent engineering feat for the period. It traversed wild gorges, brought the Hirschberg valley into direct communication with the loftier mountain range, thence winding its way through them over the Prussian frontier into Bohemia.

The Prussian Government and some of the Sovereign Princes were almost the only patrons of the arts, for the aristocracy hardly counted at all as such. Count Schack, who paid such masters as Boecklin and Lenbach at the rate of £2 a week for their work (!), was the exception marking the rule. The only evidence of aristocratic patronage of the pictorial arts I can remember to have seen in early days were some reproductions of English racing colour-prints in the châteaux of the aristocracy, as indicative of an admiration for English country life. The principal German picture buyers of to-day, those of the "haute finance" and the "haute industrie," had scarcely come into being: Krupp, the cannon caster, still directed his business from the unpretentious little working man's shed shown to-day to the visitor as a curiosity.

The wealthy German manufacturer who does his correspondence to-day by means of telegrams, who engages a suite of rooms at a London hotel for £500 to see a coronation, was unknown, unheard and undreamt of. The sons of the middle class manufacturers and merchants were brought up in accordance with the ideals of their parents, which were those of their home. Those who served in the army came out of it and returned to their different occupations in civil life without the ambition to see their families ennobled, without that taint of restlessness which serious German writers of to-day deplore as a sign of degeneracy. People in general worked from the inside, as, according to a dictum of Richard Wagner, used to be

German wont. They were content to plod on with love in their hearts for the task in hand, without any of that incessant craving for "quick returns" which we see to-day. People possessed an individuality born either of a distinct period, of a given nationality, or of their own particular calling, the contemplation of which gratified the longing with which most of us are imbued to look for character and reality in the place of chimera and sham. Altogether the high pressure and surface work, the superficial feeling, the irresponsible verbiage connected therewith all over the world to-day, were unknown. Nations and individuals were satisfied with the consciousness of their own value, and were not consumed by a desire to impart a fictitious version of it day by day to the world at large. And it was well for Germany that it was so. It was also good for the nervous system, which came up taut and strong in supreme moments in collective action and carried all before it.

There was a stubborn grit<sup>1</sup> which, united with a rare frugality of habit and simplicity of mind, showed great results when its products were tried by the ordeal of fire. The significance of all this is apparent when we bear in mind that these were the conditions in which those men grew up who have since filled the world with their renown and created that which we know to-day as Modern Germany.

Not that such changes are to be ascribed to the action of an individual or any number of such. The conditions of life all the world over have undergone radical, and in some respects

<sup>1</sup> Count Beust relates in his *Memoirs* (vol. 1. p. 76) a remarkable instance of that independence of character so conspicuous at the period: "The Royal Concertmeister Roeckel had been condemned to death for his share in the revolutionary movement in Dresden in 1849, and his sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life in the prison of Waldheim. When passions had somewhat subsided the King was ready to pardon those who applied by petition for mercy." This Roeckel refused to do, and even remained obdurate when Beust visited the gaol in person, although he had by that time suffered imprisonment for twelve years. Count Beust continues: "At length I succeeded in obtaining his liberation from the King, even without a petition. I ventured to say that this resistance had something of antique grandeur about it, and I added, 'Where is the reactionist who would endure twelve years of imprisonment without praying for mercy?' The King laughed and yielded."

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ominous, changes. The fierce limelight of publicity, the blatant shout of the market-place, these influences seem to have stunted the development of individual personality, and favoured the growth of the impersonal mob, in its absorption of every independent impulse. Where individual enterprise once produced individuality and results from which the present is still drawing its sustenance, huge impersonal concerns now submerge individual effort; we experience a certain *malaise* such as a cultivated member of an audience occasionally feels when looking on at a transparently unreal and vulgar performance.

This change strikes me as noticeable in every sphere of life in Germany, except among the best of all classes. To revert to Saxony, with which I was more particularly familiar, King John was a distinct character, to whom all theatricalism was distasteful. Military uniform did not suit him; it rarely does suit a high type of man. The King wore plain clothes; in these he was pictured, and with his finely chiselled features looked kingly. King John of Saxony was a man of letters and learning who, under the pseudonym of "Philalethes," had written and published a translation of Dante's "Divina Commedia." He was a genuine man and a gentleman; genuine in his antagonism to Prussia and his partiality for Austria, for which he staked his crown and nearly lost it. But when the game was up he loyally accepted defeat, and recognised its consequences. He threw himself on the mercy of King William, who, it is said, received him in a magnanimous spirit similar to that displayed on another great occasion in German history, when Ludwig the Bavarian met with open arms Frederick the Handsome of Habsburg, after he had defeated him at the battle of Mühlberg.

Another striking personality, something on a small and subdued scale of the Roi Soleil or of August the Strong, was Herr von Beust, the Saxon Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose two sons were my schoolfellows. I remember him riding in the Grosser Garten, his flowing greyish locks waving in the wind. As a person of importance in the public mind he

ranked next to the King. I made the Minister's acquaintance in 1872, at the house of a friend, when he was passing through Dresden on his way from Vienna, having just resigned his Chancellorship of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy to take up the post of Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, where again I was his guest in Belgrave Square. Herr von Beust—after his Austrian experiences Count Beust—was a somewhat vain man, as proved by his *Reminiscences*, and by his influence over the King of Saxony and his opposition to Prussia he may be said to have jeopardised the very existence of the kingdom of Saxony. But he possessed high intellectual gifts, and the courage he often displayed in facing hostile public opinion, stamps him as a strong personality. That he was also endowed with certain qualities of heart and mind may be fairly inferred from the fact of the deep and sincere attachment with which he inspired his Sovereign, who, in spite of the misfortune which Beust's policy brought upon him and his country, retained a deep sense of obligation, even of affection for him. The King was too proud a man to throw one over "zu den Todten"—to cast coldly to the dead one whom he had once honoured by his confidence, even though such confidence, as proved by events, had been misplaced.

As I recall those remote days the large amount of interest which the theatre excited among the public stands out in sharp relief. It is inconceivable to-day how little politics then occupied the thoughts of the community, and how a large proportion of their interests were devoted to literature and the arts, and more particularly to the opera and the drama.

The German theatres had long been one of the most potent influences for the education of the people.<sup>1</sup> They had in this respect almost reverted to what they originally sprang from, namely, a part of the cult of a people, a connection which still survives in the Oberammergau Passion Plays. This

<sup>1</sup> In 1900 there existed in the German Empire 400 theatres which could claim to possess serious artistic qualifications. Twenty of these were subsidised Court theatres and sixty-five municipal theatres, either subsidised or let out by the municipal authorities, some of them at as low a fee as £2 a performance.

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educational influence was, it seems to me, more prominent fifty years ago than it is to-day, now that the music-hall and other entertainments of an inferior kind have brought strenuous competition to bear upon high-class theatres. These, whatever might have been their limitations, were then veritable temples of intellectual worship, as set forth in the words, "Dem Wahren, Schoenen, Guten,"<sup>1</sup> inscribed in big letters over the portico; dedicated not to the intellect of Germany alone, but to that of the whole world. The subsidised Court theatres, as also the excellent municipal theatres of many German towns, are more or less independent of pecuniary returns; they are not obliged to fit their programmes according to the demand of the greatest number, and thus to pander to a half-educated majority of the public—a condition not unlike that of the Press in all countries, which is fatal to its progressive educational influence.

In this respect the Dresden Court Theatre in its golden days was indeed happily situated. A creation of that architectural genius, Gottfried Semper,<sup>2</sup> it was the most beautiful structure of the kind in Germany. The stately building stood out free and clear of all others on the spacious Theaterplatz, in close proximity to the River Elbe, only needing elevation of site in order to be visible from afar, like some Greek temple. The mere sight of such an edifice could scarcely fail to raise the mind of the visitor above the level connected with a place of entertainment. This favourable impression was further emphasised on entering the foyer, where stood tall beaules, wearing cocked hats, clad in a striking uniform, a broad sash across the shoulder with the Royal arms in silver and green, holding in the hand an imposing staff mounted with a silver ball as a knob, from which hung silver-braided tassels. The drop curtain was in itself a beautiful and suggestive work of

<sup>1</sup> "Dedicated to the True, the Beautiful, the Good"—an extension of Plato's *καλόν καγαθόν*, including the element of truth.

<sup>2</sup> The Dresden theatre was burned down in 1869, and a new building even larger and more magnificent was erected on its site, designed by the same master hand.

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art, consisting of a number of exquisitely drawn figures taken promiscuously from the plays of the greatest dramatists of all countries. It is related that Andrea del Sarto's fresco painting of "The Last Supper," in the Abbey of San Salvi, near Florence, made such a powerful impression on the besieging soldiery that they spared the building. So also the curtain of the Dresden theatre directed the thoughts of the audience before even the play began towards the master-works of dramatic genius of the whole world's literature.

In attending a performance it was as if you were taking part in a function—almost a rite—in which the money-making element scarcely figured at all; the less so as the prices of admission were on a most moderate scale. There were three different scales of prices: for light comedy, historical drama, and grand opera. In historical drama and opera the stalls cost three shillings, and the most expensive seats in the house four shillings. But, whatever the performance, the gallery cost only sixpence, for which price the people were able to witness some of the finest dramatic performances in the whole world. The stalls cost twenty-five neugroschen (two shillings and sixpence) on nights when light comedy was given. This was raised to one thaler ten groschen (four shillings) on nights of historical drama or grand opera, and all other seats were cheap in proportion. Added to these advantages, the performances were of the highest character, for the Dresden theatre was at its best in the "sixties," and first-class artists filled every department of drama and opera. The very fact of being a member of the Royal Court Theatre, and as such entitled to a pension for life, conferred social distinction on the most obscure member of the chorus. My father was a great believer in the educational influence of the stage. He took me to the theatre every evening when he came to Dresden, and left instructions with the headmaster of the Vitzthum Gymnasium that, as a means of learning the German language, I should be allowed to go to the theatre as often as was compatible with the discipline of the school. By these means I saw more of the opera and the drama

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generally than falls to the lot of most young men in their teens, and the experience has remained engraved on my memory down to the present day.

The repertory embraced, as indicated on the drop curtain, the masterpieces of the world's dramatists and the world's composers. Foremost among the former stood Shakespeare—represented by nearly all his plays. The idea of a Shakespeare “revival” would have seemed to the good Dresden theatre-going public as absurd as the idea of a “revival” of the Deity! Shakespeare was always with us in all his protean immensity. Of French dramatists Molière was foremost, and the figure of Harpagon in “L'Avare” was one of those on the curtain; but Portugal, Spain and Italy were also represented by the works of Calderon, Lope de Vega, and Alfieri. Schiller, Goethe and Lessing naturally formed the staple of German classics, but Hebbel, Kleist, Brachvogel, Gustav Freytag and many others were not forgotten. The modern French plays of Alexandre Dumas  *fils*, Sardou and other lights of the Second Empire, however, with their ever-recurring theme of adultery, were rigorously excluded.

The repertory of the Dresden opera was probably one of the most varied ever possessed by any theatre in the world. Beethoven, Mozart, Gluck, Spohr, Spontini, Cherubini, Nicolai, Meyerbeer, Flotow, Weber, Wagner, Marschner, Lortzing, Méhul, Adam, Gounod, Boieldieu, Auber, Hérold, Halévy, Rossini, Verdi, Bellini and Donizetti—all these were in the répertoire, and works of nearly all of them I remember to have witnessed. The ballet, a special feature of the opera, was by no means the least attractive. There was something chaste in the beautiful apparition of the prima ballerina, Fräulein Bose; something unspoilt, natural, and childlike in the admiration she and other graceful women evoked. Such a loathsome performance as that of the pantomime intermezzo, “The Vampyre,” which, in our time, has gone the round of the world, was impossible in Dresden.

So perfectly constructed was the theatre with its many exits that it was usually quite empty within three to five minutes of



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the fall of the curtain. Such a thing as a crush, people getting up and rushing to the door before the end of the performance, was unknown. The elevating nature of the performance prevented such an occurrence. There was no shouting for carriages, inasmuch as people, even those of light and leading, walked on foot the short distance home from the theatre. Of a winter evening, with the snow on the ground, this emptying of the theatre was a most picturesque sight. Here and there was a lady, in a sedan chair hired from the Altmarkt, the only remaining station in Europe where it could be procured, and borne by carriers clad in quaint eighteenth-century rococo costumes; with groups of officers of the Blue Garde Reiter in their gilt brass Grecian helmets—for many of these were regular frequenters of the theatre in the first row of the stalls—independently of those who were on duty for the occasion. The performance was usually over a little after nine o'clock.

People drew their inspiration from the stage in those days, and where now political Party leaders attract their attention, the leading actors and singers stood for the ideal of "Dem Wahren, Schoenen, Guten." Partisanship was strong among the public. It extended from the highest in the land down to the humblest. Even domestic servants had their favourite singers and actors, whom they went to hear on their "evenings out," and old General von Zetteritz would never miss a performance when that charming singer, Fräulein Alvsleben, sang. "Even if I have to crawl on all fours I must go to the opera to-night," he said to his servant. And sure enough, there he sat in the Fremdenloge—a vision of a past age, with his Russian field-glass, of Beresina memory, never once removed from his old grey eyes throughout the performance.

A great celebrity of those days was Emil Devrient, the actor, the idol of the Dresden public. Though past his prime, for he was well over sixty, he was still a handsome man of most distinguished appearance and dignity of manner. As Marquis Posa, in Schiller's "Don Carlos," he was ideal. At the words addressed to King Philip, "Sire, give your people

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freedom of thought," the pit, gallery and stalls rose to the consciousness of taking their share in the struggle for political liberty then already in progress in Germany. Devrient may be said to have dominated the theatrical world of Dresden, which felt it to be an honour that he belonged to it. And yet with all this cult on the part of the public, no actor, however distinguished, was allowed to interfere with the artistic unity of a performance. There was no baneful "star" influence. I have seen Devrient cheerfully play a minor part—yes, even a greater than he, Bogumil Dawison, undertake the insignificant rôle of a Lothringian knight in Schiller's "Maid of Orleans."

Some years before the final struggle between Prussia and Austria for the hegemony of Germany took place there had been a growing estrangement between Saxony and Prussia, or, to be more exact, between the Saxon capital and Berlin, for the city of Leipzig was reputed to be considerably less antagonistic to Prussia. A fifth-rate Dresden actor, named Nesmueller, who introduced some patriotic anti-Prussian couplets into his part, was decorated by Herr von Beust. Most people, at least those whom I remember, were intensely anti-Prussian. Nesmueller's theatre was the only one existing besides the beautiful Royal Opera House, and was situated in the Gewandhausstrasse over a row of butchers' shops: a fact which at times was brought unpleasantly home to the audience. In the summer the troupe performed in a so-called Sommer-Theater in the Grosse Garten, a somewhat primitive affair. But, for all that, serious plays were now and then given, for Frau Nesmueller was a cultivated actress. One afternoon, my father took me to the Grosse Garten, where they gave a historical drama dealing with the period of the Seven Years War. Frau Nesmueller filled the part of the Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, and right well she rose to her task. In the course of the play a Prussian envoy was admitted to the presence of the Empress, and, emphasising the demands of Prussia, and the means that Power possessed to extort their acceptance, he used the words: "For, Madam, we have got money and we have got brains." These words, delivered with

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strong emphasis by the actor, impressed my father, who, like most of the people we met, was Austrian in his sympathies. The factors of money and brains were not usually taken into consideration at that time when discussing the chances of war. It was in a way a revelation, a portent of things to come.

Not long after Frau Nesmueller's excellent theatrical impersonation, that which was mere stage play became grim reality, and soon the cry arose, "The Prussians are coming!" A spirit of *sauve qui peut* came over the authorities. They fled with the national cash-box and the far-famed treasures of the Green Vaults, for, with their memories of Napoleonic times, an irruption of veritable Huns was looked for: only the Saxon army preserved its dignity, and retired into Bohemia to await the foe. The Prussians came over-night with the suddenness of a cataclysm, but a new spirit came with them, and private property, as also that of the State, was respected. It remained untouched; only a little horse-play was indulged in at the expense of Herr von Beust's country-house, as he tells us in his Memoirs. Despite a fierce inflaming of passions nobody was harmed—at least no Saxons. The relationship between the Prussian and Saxon aristocracy was close, as intermarriage was frequent. For this class, therefore, the conflict was almost one of civil war. Herr von Mutius, of the Prussian Garde Corps (who had been at the Vitzthum Gymnasium, and whom I met many years after, at a Silesian country-house), told me that when he came to Dresden with the Prussians, his sister, who was married in Saxony, ran after him in the street upbraiding and vilifying him in public, so that, giant as he was in his uniform, he was obliged to threaten to have her arrested.

On the approach of the Prussians, the Saxons blew up the railway-bridge over the Elbe at Riesa in order to delay the enemy; but the Prussians soon repaired the damage, and replaced the missing rails with those which they had brought with them for the purpose. When the enemy entered Dresden and demanded quarters of the mayor for 40,000 men, the magistrate said it would be impossible to find room

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for so many. Thereupon the Prussian General took a parchment from one of his aides-de-camp and, unrolling it, displayed a detailed plan of the city, on which the necessary quarters for 40,000 men were carefully marked out in every detail. This was *nouveau jeu* for the good Saxons!

A few weeks after peace was proclaimed I passed through Dresden and Bohemia with my father. In the town of Reichenberg there was a Prussian garrison, and I witnessed the painful spectacle of wounded Austrian officers limping through the streets as prisoners in their own country. A break of nearly five years now occurs in my German memories, as I went back to London and returned to Germany only in the spring of 1871.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EMPEROR WILLIAM I

I HAD spent several years in my father's business in London when in the spring of 1871 he sent me to Germany to look after the Continental interests of his firm. I took up my abode in Dresden, from whence, as occasion might require, I paid flying visits to those factories that were in commercial relations with us. Although I was brought up with the view of entering my father's business I possessed a fair knowledge of English, German, French and Italian literature, having spent two years in Brussels mainly devoted to the study of French and Italian. I now utilised my spare time to fill up the gaps of my education by the study of music, German literature and philosophy. I lived at that time in the same flat with a Swiss staff officer, Major Burnier, of the Military Academy of Thun. He had gone through the war as military attaché with the German staff, and had come to Dresden to work up the material he had gathered. I saw a good deal of him, and it was most suggestive to notice how events which appealed to the outer world in all their martial glamour were professionally dissected and analysed as so much scientific matter without a vestige of sentiment of any kind. He was one of the most kindly men I ever met, and I do not remember one single sentence coming from his lips in criticism of anybody. I used to ride out of an early summer morning before breakfast far and wide in the beautiful surroundings of Dresden. My companion now and then was a sergeant of the Garde Reiter who had been present at the battle of Sedan. We both rode horses that had been through the war, for many thoroughbreds had been disposed of after that battle at about a sovereign

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apiece, and of these a number had found their way to Dresden and got into the hands of jobmasters from whom they could be hired.

As two acquaintances of mine were going to Berlin to witness the triumphal entry of the troops on the 16th June, I availed myself of the opportunity to accompany them. It was my first visit to the Prussian capital, and we had the greatest difficulty in finding lodgings; but at last we discovered one room in a third-rate hotel, where we were "allowed" to lie on the floor at 15 marks each per night. In the morning we were in the streets before five o'clock, and remained out all day and far into the night and the next morning. It was an indescribable sight, probably unique in the annals of the world, this pageant of triumph of a great nation after unparalleled victories. Even at this distance of time the recollection of it thrills the heart and lifts the mind on to a plane scarcely in consonance with latter-day reality.

There is a springtide in the affairs of a nation as there is in the life of an individual. Indeed, nations are endowed with the faculty of renewing their youth, but only after periods of suffering, fervour (*Sammlung*) and chastity, which bring about, as it were, a re-birth, a renaissance. It is then that for a short spell they seem to be capable of great, unselfish effort, as we all are in the springtime of our first love. Were it otherwise the progress of the world would be consecutive, whereas we know that, like the motion of the sea, it is subject to fluctuations, to retrogressions as well as progressions. The years 1866-1871 constituted such a period in the life of the German nation, the achievements of which—not merely in arms—were only possible as the product of an idealism which sprang from an auspicious concatenation of circumstances, as unsuspected by the outer world as it was tremendous in its manifestation.

This found its culminating-point in the return home of the German troops in the early summer of 1871. Nearly a year of excitement had brought the best, and probably also some of the worst, elements to the surface; but the best enormously

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predominated. For, except in the case of millionaire army contractors, hardly anybody had been engaged in a selfishly profitable occupation during that period; the thought of the community was concentrated on the weal and woe of others. This allowed full play to the sympathies of the heart for our fellow creatures. It was—alas! for a short span of time only—as if the unamiable characteristics of a whole race had been exorcised as by a fairy's magic wand. The memory of those days recalls values, cleansed of their slag—of the dross which clings to all human things.

What is past returneth never ;  
But if gone in radiance bright,  
Long will glow its lustrous light !

Not a single intoxicated person did I see : not a coarse or boastful word, hardly a loud one, did I hear on that memorable day—and even far into the night—when 45,000 troops led by the Emperor and his Paladins entered Berlin through the renowned Brandenburg Gate and defiled through the Linden. By the exercise of some little ingenuity we managed to obtain admission at the back of the Military Guard House, which, seen from Unter den Linden, is situated on the left hand side, immediately adjoining the Brandenburg Gate. We were allowed to get on the roof of the building, and thus we had the whole spectacle directly in front of us—a vantage-ground which no amount of money could have secured.

The roofs of the houses of the Pariser Platz were black with people. Of the outline of the quadriga at the top of the Brandenburg Gate little could be distinguished beyond the figure of the female charioteer holding the bronze eagle staff aloft in her hand, so dense was the crowd that had obtained admission to the lofty position. Huge stands and red-draped platforms met the eye, inside and outside of the Gate, row upon row of seats rising tier upon tier to the very roofs of the houses, and outside the Gate level with the tops of the trees of the Thiergarten. Wreaths, garlands, festoons, covered the facing of the house fronts, stout threads of green wound round

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and round the six columns of the Gate from base to summit. Pennons, banners and bandoliers, venetian masts with the armorial bearings of cities and provinces perched up half-way, and decorated with flags, drapery and ornamental mouldings, dazzled the eye by their kaleidoscopic variety. The broad space immediately in front of the Brandenburg Gate was alone kept clear for the passage of the troops; its width, embracing the centre of the Pariser Platz, is about 60 to 70 ft., and it was sprinkled with yellow gravel up to the avenue of the Linden. A separate red-draped stand was erected just inside the gate for the Maids of Honour, in front of whom the Emperor drew up as he rode in and received their homage.

I cannot recall the exact sequence of the military pageant, nor the hour it began, nor when it was over, nor how many regimental bands thrilled us with their stirring strains. Not the glamour, the glitter, but rather the human side of this bewildering spectacle has remained in my memory.

A brilliant group, consisting of several hundred horsemen, indicates that the culminating-point of the day is at hand. They are full Generals—some of them have held independent commands in battle—with achievements to their credit which, in a war of smaller dimensions, would have entitled them to triumphs of their own. Here they are fused in the mass, serving a higher purpose than the recognition of their own glory. The crowd is on tenter-hooks expecting the Emperor to follow immediately upon his Generals, but he had prepared a surprise for his good Berliners. A tremendous shout arises when the figures of Moltke, Bismarck, and Roon riding abreast—Bismarck in the middle—come in sight immediately in front of the Emperor, the Crown Prince and Prince Frederick Charles riding on either side of the Monarch.

When these six men ride in under the archway of the Brandenburg Gate, and draw rein in face of the wild enthusiasm their presence creates, the effect is overpowering! I throw myself flat on the slanting leaden roof, burning hot though it is from the rays of the sun, lest the rush of air,



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as of a hurricane, might hurl me over the ledge on the bayonets of the soldiers below. It is the supreme moment, the apotheosis of victorious Germany, and it comes as a relief to over-wrought nerves when the Emperor leads the way to the group of Maids of Honour clad in white stationed to the right of us, and thence passes on through the avenue of Linden trees, on each side of which scores of the captured cannon and mitrailleuses are ranged in rows : a staggering sight.

The crowd is now in a state of delighted good-nature, as one passing column of troops succeeds the other. The French "eagles" are carried aloft by men chosen from every section of the German army—Saxons, Bavarians, and others. In a moment the cheers are hushed as if by a feeling of awe for something sacred, calling for lowliness of heart in the presence of these symbols of victory, the winning of which has cost rivers of blood.

I fancy I can hear the rhythmic tramp of the troops—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—passing in endless columns ; the pennons on the lances of the famous Uhlans fluttering in the breeze, but most popular, as it seems to me, are the regiments of infantry, the "Guards" stationed in peace in the neighbourhood of Berlin, for one can see that many of them are recognised by the crowd, which hails them individually in its humorous way :

Trotz Chassepot und Kugelspritze  
Da kommt zurueck der Koerner Fritze,<sup>1</sup>

Many were covered with oak leaves and wreaths of green and pine boughs, which gave them the corporate appearance of the army led by Macduff through Birnam Wood to meet Macbeth in battle ! I noticed a boy clad in a soldier's tattered overcoat reaching down to his feet. He, too, was covered with leaves of laurel, pine, and oak ! probably a camp-follower, who had been with the regiment from start to finish ; but he seemed a man in his martial bearing as he strode along defiantly in

<sup>1</sup> " In spite of chassepot and mitrailleuse,  
Lo ! Freddy Koerner back again."

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spite of his load of green in front of the column. This boy received quite an ovation from the crowd. As the day went on and column succeeded column, the cavalry and artillery quickened their pace until towards the close horses and cannon thundered along helter-skelter.

*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*

If this was the apotheosis of victorious Germany, it was no less the culminating-point in the career of the Emperor-King the ruler, on whose birthday (the evening of the 22nd of March) eight years previously I had stood as a boy before the Prussian barracks at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. Not a soul turned to look at the cold, quivering gas illumination over the portico in honour of the event, or to take the slightest notice of the sullen-looking Prussian sentinel in his box. King William was then still popularly known as the "Grapeshot Prince,"<sup>1</sup> as the autocrat who at his coronation at Königsberg had declared that he held his office by Divine grace, and who, with the complicity of a certain Bismarck had dared to rule in opposition to the will of Parliament. This man had become within the short space of five years a hero—a War God—and he looked it, a very halo encompassed him. But his vast popularity, strange to say, seemed somehow to have its source not so much in the prestige of victory as in the belated recognition of his sincerity, his qualities of heart, without which there never was and never will be any genuine greatness on earth. It was the father, the patriarch, not the autocrat who stood supreme before the whole world in success, and also in self-restraint; for there was a touch of spontaneous grace, of magnanimity in the man. Small wonder that he gained the love and veneration of a people among which these sentiments for a sovereign had hitherto found small scope for growth or manifestation. His

<sup>1</sup> Some years afterwards I met an elderly widow lady in Dresden society whose husband, Freiherr von Trützschler-Falkenstein, had been condemned to death by court-martial in the Revolution in Baden in 1849 and was shot, after his wife had vainly thrown herself at the feet of Prince William of Prussia (since German Emperor) imploring his mercy.

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own brother and predecessor as King of Prussia evoked such a feeling of indifference that when he walked abroad the Berliners had been known to turn their backs on him !

Every German capital and every republican city—Hamburg, Bremen, and Luebeck to wit—had its own triumphal entry. I saw the return of the Saxon troops to Dresden. The Emperor came not : he did not wish to come, he was free from egotism and thus he wanted others to be unfettered, to rejoice among themselves. He knew he had done his best for all, and shrank from being constantly reminded of it and glorified for doing his duty. Never a boastful word of the services which he and his ancestors had rendered to the State fell from his lips. When the newly built palatial hotel, the Kaiserhof, was opened and the Emperor was asked to inspect it, he was confronted by his own portrait in oils on the wall staring at him, and he instinctively shrank back. “Must I always be dragged in?” he pleaded. The Emperor was a father to the army, more particularly to his officers. Those of the old Prussian noble families were nearest his heart ; he knew most of them by name, but this did not mean favouritism for them at the expense of those who were not noble. He appreciated each individually according to his character and his services. If misfortune overtook them, he helped them generously from his private purse, although personally he retained an almost Spartan penuriousness.

One day the German Embassy in London received a message from Berlin that the Emperor was forwarding his old field-glass for repairs, with instructions to send it to the same shop at which he had purchased it when he was last in London as a refugee in 1848, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Cheapside. To-day the finest and most expensive field-glasses in the world are made in Berlin. I remember seeing one of the Emperor’s sporting guns at a Berlin gunsmith’s, where it had been sent for repair. It was a plain Lefauchaux pin-fire, long after the improved central-fire system had become common. It was a gun at which an English gamekeeper might have turned up his nose. The Emperor was strongly

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averse to spending money on himself. When it was a question of buying an expensive charger for him to ride, he said it was a pity to spend so much money on an old man. I give the incident in the words of the old Emperor's chief equerry, now Major-General E. von Meyer, as he has given it to me. "In the year 1879 I was ordered to go to England to look for horses for the Emperor, and in case I found any suitable ones to buy two or three for him. I soon discovered a hunter, which appeared to possess the requisite qualities, but it was to cost £400. I sent in my report and in reply was informed that the Emperor was inclined to acquire the horse in question, but found the price dreadfully high, and further purchases at such a figure were not to be thought of. Unfortunately, the Emperor never rode this particular horse, as it went incurably lame in the course of being broken in. His Majesty rode on horseback for the last time in the year 1886, when he was eighty-eight years of age. Until that date he attended all parades and manœuvres on horseback. If it ever happened that his mount did not exactly parry, and if when His Majesty alighted I endeavoured to apologise for the *contretemps*, he invariably replied: 'It was not the fault of the horse, but my own.' The Emperor's great kindness of heart was manifest on every occasion."

The Emperor possessed to an eminent degree the three virtues of loyalty, benevolence, and a sense of gratitude; all three of which, by his example, he diffused around him, thus stamping his individuality on his time and on a people not usually much inclined to receptivity in this respect. Those that served him near his person treasured the memory of their service until their dying day as an experience worth having lived for. He could not bring himself to part with old friends who had served him well, whether it was a field-glass, a gun, a horse, or an old soldier! The brute-god, Mammon, with mocking laughter, had not yet entered upon the scene in old William's days, nor had an indiscriminate cult of mechanical efficiency deadened the perception in high places of that which is spiritual, a part of the very soul of a people, that

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which had enabled the Germans to face the French victoriously up the deadly slopes of Spicheren, although armed with a weapon vastly inferior to the chassepot.

There was a sense of good-natured humour, of common rejoicing, *la joie de vivre*, in the air in this rare period. It was related that when the Emperor held his Court and Marshal Wrangel took his place among his old veterans—older by far than the Emperor, for he was born in the year 1784, and had fought in the battle of Leipzig as a captain—the Emperor would poke him gently in the ribs with the spike of his helmet. This made the old warrior smile and exclaim: “Majestaet belieben zu scherzen” (“Your Majesty deigns to make fun”). The Prussian officer, mocked by Heine and more or less disliked for his supposed arrogance, seemed to have undergone a metamorphosis. Victory had cleansed and clothed him with a mien of modesty, simplicity, and affability, which had hitherto been deemed foreign to his nature. Not a word of vainglory or a trace of self-assertion remains in my memory from the casual contact I had with many German officers in those days. The word “patriotism” was never heard, but it was in evidence nevertheless.

This happy frame of mind was noticeable in many places. It was as if the suffering of the past had been wiped away in a joyous boyish jubilation set free, which coloured everything—song, drama, and letters. The very street songs, the adventures of the common soldier, “Kutschke,” were humorous, good-natured banter. Pauline Lucca, one of the renowned singers of the time, whose husband, a Prussian officer, had been wounded in the war, made a triumphal progress through the country with Gumbert’s simple song “Mein ganzer Reichthum ist mein Lied.” The lovely Oceana, the queen of the circus, enthralled soldiers and civilians by her grace as a rider and her extraordinary beauty. Harmless humour, not unmixed with sentimentality, but at least free from the ugly idiosyncrasies of a later period, marked the popular novelists of the time.

A feature of greater and deeper import was Bismarck’s

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stand against the pretensions of the Roman hierarchy and the sympathy it evoked in England. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom of the Kulturkampf as a political measure, it certainly brought England and Germany together as rarely before and never since. The best of both nations stood on one platform in championship of something nobler than the struggle for markets, the rivalry in armaments—the fight for the freedom of the mind. More than fifty public meetings were held in the United Kingdom, the most notable being those at St. James's and Exeter Halls. The names of the representative Englishmen who sympathised with Germany at that time filled nearly eighty printed pages, and called forth a stirring letter of thanks from the Emperor addressed to Earl Russell, besides an address signed by the most distinguished members of the German Reichstag, the Prussian Chamber, and numerous public bodies throughout the German Empire. Such is the only struggle in which England and Germany should ever engage, and then shoulder to shoulder.

It was, perhaps, only natural that such a time should have affected the nerves of a subsequent generation, those that had had no direct experience of its trials, its tragedies, and its heroisms, much less an insight into the true spiritual sources of it all. It is on record to the glory of Germany that these experiences did not vitiate those who had borne their brunt. A perusal of the Emperor's correspondence with Bismarck during the following years, in its simple human interest and consideration for others, and an ever-present sense of gratitude to the man who had cast so much splendour on the House of Hohenzollen, reads like a fairy-tale from another world, in which humour and *naïveté* of heart were still potent features.

Now and then I came to Berlin in the following years to see my paternal friend Dr. Ernst Engel, the eminent statistician, long the head of the Prussian Statistical Bureau. He used to tell me stories of the Emperor's sterling character, his affability and of the keen intellectual interests of the Empress, who loved to see deserving men of mark and high character at



*1. September 1871.  
Morgens 12 Uhr 15 Min.*

PRINCE BISMARCK





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her little parties at Babelsberg. When, in 1882, Engel, owing to differences with Bismarck, resigned his position, retired into private life, and went to live at Dresden I used to see him oftener. I asked him one day why he had not said good-bye to the Emperor before leaving Berlin. He replied that he had refrained from doing so because he knew in advance that the Emperor would have said to him: "Why do you leave me, since you see that I am still sticking to my post?"

A showy, decorative element is abroad to-day which was absent forty years ago. Strolling in the Unter den Linden and taking a glance at the photographers' showcases, in which any number of undistinguished faces in uniforms covered with stars and crosses meet your eye, it is not easy to conjure up the unadorned simplicity which was such a striking feature of the years 1870-1871. The sight of the Iron Cross of the second class carried with it in those days the inspiring impression that its wearer had gone through one of the greatest wars of modern times, and had possibly taken his part in half a dozen pitched battles. The Iron Cross of the first class, identical with that of the second in its severe simplicity only that it was worn over the heart, was indeed an extraordinary distinction! And yet even this had been won and worn by many men in a subordinate position. The order "*Pour le mérite*" was only given to the Crown Prince on the battlefield of Sadowa, and it made quite a sensation in the Prussian army when a mere major (von Versen) was awarded this highest of all military distinctions on the same occasion.

A trait of homely human interest still lingers in my memory of that far-off golden time. It is typical of the democratic spirit in which services rendered to the wounded were rewarded after the war. A buxom, elderly woman and her daughter kept the refreshment buffet at the small out-of-the-way railway station of Reibnitz, in the Silesian Giant Mountains. At whatever time of the day or night the traveller turned up he was always sure of a cup of excellent coffee, which the daughter prepared whilst the mother would entertain the wayfarer, who, like myself, had often passed

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that way and was well known to her, with tales of the war. For she had done good work during the campaigns of 1866 and 1870 as nurse to the wounded. "Yes," she said, "I have both the second and the first class of the coveted Louisen Order," the latter only awarded as a rule to ladies of high position. "I received the second class after the war of '66, and the first class was given to me after 1870 by the Kaiser. When he last attended a parade at Breslau I thought I would like to pay my respects to him," and her eyes lit up with enthusiasm as she continued, "so I donned my decorations and took up a position where I was likely to attract the Emperor's notice in passing, and sure enough, when His Majesty rode past on horseback he drew rein, stopped short in front of me with his whole staff, saluted me three times (*drei mal hat er mir Honneurs gemacht*), and exclaimed, 'Woman! what services must you have rendered (*geleistet*) to have deserved such high distinctions.'

I saw the old War Lord once again in Dresden on the 17th of September, 1882, on the occasion of a fête of the Albert Verein, an international institution called into being by Queen Carola of Saxony as part of the Red Cross Association for the succour of sick and wounded soldiers. This brought the Emperor, already eighty-four years of age, to the Saxon capital. I caught a glimpse of him from afar as he stood erect in his spiked helmet in front of the rococo Palace opposite the lake in the Grosse Garten, and was addressed in flowing verse in her silvery voice by Fräulein Pauline Ulrich, the charming "first heroine" of the Royal Court Theatre, clad in a white Grecian robe with a plain gold band in her hair. The Emperor, courteous as ever, graciously thanked her, and, as she afterwards proudly told me, gave her a beautiful jewel.

This period, unique in the history of Germany of a thousand years, may be said to have come to an end with the Emperor's death when his son, a dying man, penned the following proclamation, which was brought to the knowledge of the public in the *Reichsanzeiger* of the 9th of March, 1888:

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“His Majesty the Kaiser and King has issued the following proclamation to the Staatsministerium for publication in connection with public mourning :

“In respect of the general mourning hitherto customary we will not formulate any definite prescription. We prefer to leave it to every individual German how he may feel inclined to give expression to his grief in view of the passing of such a monarch ; as also in regard to the length of time during which it may be deemed fit that public amusements shall be curtailed.

“(Signed)           FREDERICK.”

A note was struck here mingled with tears and funeral bells, which has not found a repetition since. It came direct from a stricken human heart.

## CHAPTER IV

### DRESDEN AFTER 1870

“ I THINK Dresden is more charming and delightful than ever, and this is saying a good deal,” an English lady wrote to me the other day, and her opinion is one to which, after a familiarity of over fifty years with the capital of Royal Saxony, I most willingly subscribe: true to the love of my youth, Dresden is engraved on my heart and, unlike Cæsar, I would rather be nobody there where I have spent some of the happiest days of my life than somebody in Rome without any associations.

Many are the cities I have seen, but to Dresden I must give the palm as regards those points which, I think, constitute the attraction and charm of a city for a stranger! The delightful situation on the banks of the Elbe, its wooded surroundings, leading up stream through Loschwitz, Pillnitz, to Saxon Switzerland and the mountain fortress of Koenigstein: the endless variety and amenities to be enjoyed within a short railway journey, in these respects Dresden can scarcely be surpassed in the centre of Europe except, perhaps, by the incomparable town of Salzburg. But where are we to match the Bruehlsche Terrasse with its Belvedere, and its excellent concerts every evening all the year round? The Grosse Garten, with its beautiful ornamental grounds, its shady groves and avenues adorned by stately marble groups, its Royal Palace of the seventeenth century in front of the lake, all still breathe the air of the rococo. Each of these features may perhaps be excelled elsewhere, but nowhere have I seen such a harmonious blending of the spirit of that particular period as in Dresden.

The opera house I have already referred to; the Royal

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Palace, the Zwinger, the Green vaults, with their priceless collections; Gottfried Semper's beautiful museum building, containing the picture gallery with Raphael's Madonna—all these are famed throughout the world.

Divine service in the Roman Catholic Hofkirche, high Mass, with the splendidly trained choir to which, on great occasions, the Court singers of the opera were added—this could scarcely be matched in its impressive grandeur outside Italy. The Frauenkirche is one of the finest Protestant churches of Europe; its noble architectural proportions worthily interpret the past of a sincere and earnest people. Visible from afar—when seen from the height of Raecknitz rising out of the hazy mist of the Elbe valley—it reminded one of a mosque of Stamboul, as seen from the altitude of Pera. Imperial Germany has built a ponderous bridge over the Rhine at Cologne, but she has yet to prove her capacity to build another Frauenkirche. To listen to Luther's impressive chorales, sung by the congregation to the accompaniment of the organ, or, at Easter time, to be present when the "Passionsmusik" of Bach was rendered, as perhaps nowhere else, even in Germany, was to receive an impression from a world that is gone, but still speaking, to one in which there is a tendency to flout the past, to mock and deride the very virtues which gave it substance and value.

Even the climate of Dresden, notwithstanding its severe winter, is not without its attractiveness. In the summer there is bathing in the Elbe, and in the winter skating for weeks together, to the accompaniments of military bands in the Grosse Garten. The King and Queen occasionally join in the sport.

Yet in spite of its many advantages Dresden has hardly ever attracted men of intellectual eminence, and although the picture gallery is said to be the finest in Germany distinguished artists have seldom taken up their abode in the town. The same may be said of men of letters and musicians. Schiller wrote his "Don Carlos" at Loschwitz, near Dresden, but he went to live at Jena. Theodor Koerner, who was born in Dresden, went to Vienna. Schopenhauer lived in Dresden for four years,

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but he ultimately chose Frankfort as his residence. Ludwig Tieck, the translator of Shakespeare, lived in the Saxon capital for a time, but the King of Prussia drew him to Berlin. Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner, born Saxons, turned their backs on Dresden. Thinkers, poets, artists and musicians seem to require something which Dresden is unable to offer. The Saxon dynasty had exhausted its capacity for the patronage of great men and great ideas in its championship of Martin Luther. But Dresden has always been a favourite resort of foreigners. It has long boasted of a considerable foreign colony who were glad to avail themselves of its many facilities for the education of their children. These residents were welcomed and felt at home at the Saxon Court, and mingled on friendly terms with the aristocracy, which their limited means might not have allowed them to do in their own country.

Dresden remained for some time after the war the resort of those elements which had not become reconciled to the new order of things. Hanoverians, Electoral Hessians, Austrians, also a Russian colony and a sprinkling of the Polish element: *les comtes Polonais de table d'hôte*. So strong was still the feeling against Prussia that it was possible to hear a man spoken of in a Dresden salon as "*aussi gentilhomme qu'un Prussien peut l'être*." Unlike those who change their character with their coat, the Saxon and the other German States clung tenaciously to their idiosyncrasies, which in those days were looked upon as a hindrance to national unity. To-day the individuality of the smaller German States is welcomed in many places as a saving mercy, a plank of salvation, as against the overwhelming tendency to reduce everybody and everything to a uniform mass.

A naïve admiration for the British Peerage as the shrine of good breeding may have been a pardonable weakness. I recall a Saxon nobleman treasuring an out-of-date copy of "Burke's Peerage" like a Bible, the contents of which, too, he almost knew by heart; but no Saxon nobleman would have dreamt of dressing himself up in the undignified imitation of eccentric

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English fashions as many German aristocrats now do. Occasional marriages took place with handsome English and American girls, but a systematic race after foreign women, merely on account of their money, was unknown in those times.

Things may have changed for aught I know, but down to the "Eighties" Dresden society retained much of the qualities which made it sympathetic to the educated foreigner. The Saxon nobleman was true to type, and in spite of the supposed insincerity of the Saxon, that type was the gentleman—distinctly Saxon, but with a strong affinity to the well-bred of other countries. He retained his individuality, which was of a virile, dignified stamp. People had not yet become obsessed by a cult of uniforms, although that of the blue Garde-Reiter, in which regiment the sons of the best Saxon families served, was one of the most comely of all German military uniforms. I knew a number of men belonging to this *corps d'élite*, and with their clear-cut regular features and tall manly figures they were certainly among the most refined and handsome apparitions it would be possible to meet in the whole of uniformed Europe. The Saxon officers were silent, retiring men, dowered with a well-bred self-restraint. This did not prevent them from performing deeds of valour; for in the Bohemian campaign the Saxon contingent won the admiration of friend and foe—the valour of the vanquished; and in the war of 1870 the corps of the Crown Prince of Saxony shone with distinction beside the best. Boastful loquacity, ill-natured gossip and slander—what a German Chancellor has since designated as "carrying a sword in your mouth"—were unknown among them; and had they shown themselves would inevitably have meant social ostracism for the talker.

Together with General von Fabrice, the most striking personality in Dresden was, I think, Dr. Walther, the King's body physician. They were both men well over six feet in height, the one with the aquiline features of the soldier—he had been chief of the staff of the Saxon army in the campaign of '66," and subsequently became Saxon Minister of War—

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the other with the true cast of feature of a clean-shaven Aesculapius. I doubt whether, before or after, any mere physician in Germany had occupied so prominent a position and enjoyed such *prestige* in society as did this distinguished man, where he was spoken of as "*un prince de la science*." He was often called away for consultation at other German courts, and patients came specially to Dresden, particularly from Russia, to consult him. Walther's stately residence in the Waisenhausstrasse was a repository of the many gifts his grateful patients had bestowed upon him. His high standing was the more remarkable as it was due more to his personality than to his scientific attainments or his position as physician to the King. He was one of those representatives of essentially German culture embracing literary, philosophic and scientific attainments, and possessing a keen critical taste for art and music, together with a suavity of manner which is pre-eminently a Saxon characteristic among Germans, without ever, even in the presence of a king, losing that indefinable dignity which stamps one of Nature's aristocrats. To crown Dr. Walther's many-sidedness, he was a great epicure, and, as such, a regular diner at the *table d'hôte* of the Stadt Berlin, being admittedly its most distinguished guest, to whom the *habitués* looked up in awe as supreme arbiter, not only on culinary matters. So highly did he think of the cuisine of that establishment, and so much did he appreciate the fare, that he looked upon the occasions when King Johann asked him to dinner as "lost days." I have heard him assert that Herr Marschner's roast veal was superior to anything of the kind to be had in Paris or London. He was the only guest whose wishes the host would consider when drawing up the menu for the following day: this was now and then done on the previous evening, when the Herr Geheimrath would drop in expressly to assist at the compilation of this all-important gastronomical document. But even he was careful in his dealings with his host, for they were both men of irascible temper, and an estrangement might have necessitated a sacrifice on his part, which he was loath to make; namely, a severance of his connection with the hotel, a possibility which will be evident in the



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further course of this chapter. Things came rather near to it on an occasion which illustrated the frugal conditions of the pre-'70 days in Saxony. Until 1871 the price of the *table d'hôte* dinner, reputed to be the best in Dresden, and scarcely inferior to anything obtainable to-day in London and Paris for 5s., had been 2s. For the regular subscribers and *habitués* like Dr. Walther, however, it had only been 1s., though with the tacit understanding that a pint of wine should be consumed. After the war the regular price was raised to 3s. and 1s. 6d. for the *habitués*. With true Saxon thrift Dr. Walther objected to the surcharge, although in his other relations of life he was an open-handed and even a generous man, but he ultimately accepted the inevitable, as did the others. Alas! he was not destined to pay the increased price for long, as he died in the same year. His death was the occasion of a great demonstration; deputations from all the hospitals of the city, as well as a large number of military and civil notabilities of the capital, followed the *cortège*. I saw as many uniforms at the funeral as at a high military interment. When the procession passed his favourite hotel, the witty host, who was walking with the rank and file, said to me: "This bit of the road will be the hardest for him, for he cannot dine with us to-day."

Another *habitué* of the Hotel Stadt Berlin was a Prussian Major von Heygendorff, a name known in German literary annals as that bestowed upon the celebrated Weimarian actress, Caroline Jagemann, favourite of the Grand Duke Carl August, and opponent of Goethe's theatrical hegemony. Major von Heygendorff was her son by the Grand Duke, to whom he was said to bear a striking resemblance, the fact being that he was a handsome man, dignified in death as well as in life. He died in the hotel in which he had lived for many years. I attended his funeral at which his brother, a Saxon general of cavalry, was chief mourner. I may mention as an instance of the old-world courtesies prevailing among these people that after the burial service the General approached all present and thanked each one individually for his attendance.

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Hans Hanfstaengl, the Saxon Court photographer, was another interesting *habitué* of the Hotel Stadt Berlin, and a characteristic figure of that period. Photography had not become so universal a trade as it has since grown to be. There were pretensions to art connected with it, and they were justified in the case of Hans Hanfstaengl, whose relatives, the members of the Munich firm of that name, have since become the widely-known reproducers of the works of art of the whole world. There was nothing of the tradesman about him, but a great deal of dignity; withal he was a very handsome man, like his Munich nephews, who occasionally came to Dresden to see him. It was said that one of his nephews was the real cause of the ill-fated King of Bavaria breaking off his engagement with the sister of the Empress of Austria, who subsequently married the Duc d'Alençon and with many others perished in the terrible fire at a charity bazaar in Paris. Uncle and nephew were among the handsomest men I ever remember to have seen: splendid representatives of a blond Bavarian aristocratic pattern of male purity of features, reminding us of the giant Germanic tribes who overran Italy and conquered Rome. The perfection of this class I once met in Munich at a Schützen Fest in the person of one, Leo Dorn, a chamois hunter of the Bavarian Alps, now chief huntsman to the Prince Regent of Bavaria. He looked like what one would fancy a German chieftain to have been two thousand years ago.

When clients called at the *atelier* of Hans Hanfstaengl, and met him in his brown velvet blouse, airily smoking a cigarette, it was often a question whether he or the notability who had come to be photographed (for none but notabilities came) was the greater personage of the two. No other photographer has ever occupied the position of Hans Hanfstaengl, who emigrated to Berlin shortly after the war.

Even Boniface himself, the traditional butt of the humorist, had his hall-mark, and it was one of independence, pride, and rectitude. Both Murat, King of Naples, and Porfirio Diaz, then President of Mexico, were the sons of innkeepers. Herr

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Marschner, of the Stadt Berlin, also had the making of something beyond the ordinary in him. So marked was this man's personality that his guests felt flattered by his attentions, which were only void of a certain reserve when he was addressing old clients of the house. As he walked into the room at dinner-time, scrupulously attired in dress-coat and white cravat and surveyed the scene, he had a regular scale of bows at his command, the precise gradation of which any courtier might have envied him. I was present one evening when a Prussian baron, noted for his roughness, imagined that he had a grievance and threatened to leave the house. "Do as you please, Herr Baron," retorted Marschner, and the baron "bolted."

A peculiar etiquette regulated the dinner-table. The guests engaged in commerce, mostly wine merchants from the Rhine or manufacturers of jewellery from Pforzheim or Hanau, congregated at the further end of the triangular table; the aristocratic *abonnés* at the rectangular bend; the officers of the Blue Garde Reiter and sundry other casual visitors, now and then a Russian prince displaying a gold cigarette case, at the end nearest the door. I remember, among others, a Russian General von Osten Sacken, who had commanded a cavalry brigade in the Crimea.

A young Russian named Aphéraky, of that peculiar type which is Russian or nothing, has also remained among my Dresden memories of that time. As in the case of some Englishmen with the study of philosophy or music, intellectual studies of an absorbing kind are apt to lead towards eccentricity with Russians. It is as if the general level of the Russian people is so much out of touch with intellectual matter that higher culture becomes an exotic, and to a certain extent an intoxicant, bringing eccentricity in its train even among the most gifted; as witness Tolstoi and many others.

Aphéraky had begun life as a page-in-waiting to the Emperor Alexander II., but had withdrawn from Court life in favour of scientific pursuits. With him it was entomology (the study of butterflies). He told me that, after passing

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several months in the Caucasus collecting specimens, he had come to Dresden expressly to examine the collection of the proprietor of the Diana-bad, a well-known collector. He stayed opposite the opera house at the Hotel Bellevue, where his room was crowded with butterflies in glass cases. These, however, by no means exhausted the energetic Russian's activities. Like many Russians he engaged in everything at high pressure that only a powerful nervous system can stand in the long run. He was absorbed in music, and more particularly in the study of Wagner's operas. He subscribed for a corner seat in the front row of the stalls near the door, so that he could go out, smoke a cigarette, and return without disturbing anybody. This he did almost every quarter of an hour during the whole performance! His Wagnerian cult led him to take the train to Vienna expressly to hear the "Flying Dutchman" at the opera house, returning to Dresden the following day, and comparing and criticising the performance in both places from that of the prima donna down to the performance of each single player in the orchestra. But even music did not exhaust this curious creature's energies. He was an athlete of no ordinary proficiency. In order to demonstrate his ability he let himself drop down on the carpet with his legs stretched out at right angles from the body, as clowns do at a circus, and told me, as he did it, it was so dangerous that misjudging the angle when touching the ground might irreparably injure the spine.

Like other Russians I have met he held himself aloof from German society, and, accustomed as they are to a life of lavish profusion and reckless money-spending, looked down upon everything German which was not specifically scientific and musical as *mesquin* and Philistine.

One day he asked me to lunch with him at what was reputed to be the most expensive oyster shop in Dresden. It was one that his countrymen patronised because of its excellent Russian caviare and tea. When the bill—which I thought very extravagant—was presented, he drew a capacious portfolio from his pocket. It contained bank notes for

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thousands of thalers, and, giving the waiter a thaler as a "tip," he turned to me, saying: "What a country this is! I assure you it is absolutely impossible to spend money here!"

A feature of German life, which was exceptionally characteristic of Dresden in my time, was the so-called "Kneipenleben," in which the natural social expansiveness of the German character found a congenial outlet. Much has been said and written of the excrescences of German beer-house life, yet within due limits it has its healthy and stimulating aspects—more particularly with regard to the majority of the educated classes, whose limited means would not allow of their meeting their friends and acquaintances in their own homes. The peculiar thing about these resorts was that the more old-fashioned the building, the thicker the walls, the smaller the windows, the lower the ceilings and the less sunlight, the more popular the restaurant and the more select the company.

Here between twelve and one o'clock, in the afternoon between six and seven-thirty, and occasionally in the evening after the theatre or after evening parties, officers and government officials, even very high ones, lawyers, actors, musicians, men of letters and others would gather at their "stammtisch" (a reserved table) over a glass of beer and discuss the events of the day, sometimes even more weighty matters. Here they found that social intercourse, that stimulus and entertainment which English clubs are supposed to provide, but very rarely do so, at least in London, where it is no unusual occurrence for a man to be a member of a club for ten, twenty, or even thirty years without getting to know a single soul outside those who proposed and seconded his membership. A further pleasant feature of these German wine or beer restaurants was that everything supplied, whether food or drink, was invariably of the best quality and was always at very moderate price. This latter circumstance, however, did not prevent the proprietors of the leading establishments, by unremitting attention to their business, from amassing ample fortunes. The most stimulating gatherings

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were those at which lawyers, actors, men of learning and letters, doctors and professors, used to meet ; but they were by no means the only ones. I have read many works on Goethe, among them Hermann Grimm's instructive lectures, but no writer ever brought the supremacy of Goethe as a lyrical poet so convincingly home to me as did some conversations I had in the "seventies" in a little cosy corner of a Dresden wine-shop, sometimes prolonged until the small hours of the morning.

This partiality to "stammtisch" gatherings pervaded all classes down to that of the small artisan, and it was curious to note the artifices employed by the rival restaurant-keepers to attract customers. Advertisements in the local papers would announce special dishes, special brews on tap, winding up with the announcement of a dance on Saturday evening and a concert on Sunday. In the summer season Sunday excursions to Saxon Switzerland would be arranged at the "stammtisch" and laconically announced in the newspaper under the heading, "Look out for friends at five o'clock next Sunday morning at the Bohemian railway station," followed by the signature of the Gesangverein or Kegel-Club (skittle club) from which it emanated.

Independently of the regular "stammtisch" as a place of meeting their friends, the members of the Royal Court Theatre and of the art colony of Dresden generally had a club of their own at Helbig's restaurant, right opposite the opera house overlooking the Elbe and, from its picturesque situation, known as the Florence of the Elbe. A suite of rooms was set apart for their special use.

There I used to meet Tichatscheck, the greatest tenor of his time, the creator of the parts of Rienzi, Tannhäuser, and Lohengrin. He was an inveterate smoker, and at over sixty years of age smoked from morning to night. He would only throw his cigar away when he entered the theatre to dress before appearing on the stage. But my most elevating memory of the artists' club is the privilege I once enjoyed of playing a game of chess with Emil Devrient. The *entrée* to

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the Kuenstler Club brought me into social contact with many members of the theatrical world who were not among its frequenters: Fräulein Pauline Ulrich, long one of the most charming Dresden actresses—she joined the Dresden theatre as a girl in the year 1859, and to-day, with the honorary title of “Frau Professor,” at seventy-five years of age, she is still one of its most distinguished members; Frau Bürde-Ney, the creator of the part of Elsa in “Lohengrin,” who had sung in London at Covent Garden; her husband, Herr Bürde, one of the most entertaining of *causeurs*; Karl Kobertstein, the actor, a man of considerable literary attainments, and his beautiful wife, a direct descendant of Lessing, the poet; finally, the two musical directors of the Royal Opera, Karl Krebs and Julius Rietz, both of them composers of note.

Before coming to Dresden, Rietz had been the successor of Mendelssohn as director of the celebrated Gewandhaus concerts at Leipzig and enjoyed a great reputation as a musician. He was recognised as a supreme authority on Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, and was particularly expert as a director of Wagner's operas. He had a sharp wit and a bitter tongue, and was altogether looked upon as the man of most intellectual force and culture in the Dresden theatrical world. Speaking to me one day about Richard Wagner, he said: “Great as the Bayreuth project may be, it is still incommensurate with the vast possibilities of Wagner's genius, but, alas! the uncongenial egotism of the man is equally marked.”

Among stars that only shone as comets on the theatrical firmament of Dresden was the great actress, Clara Ziegler, whose powerful impersonation of Grillparzer's “Medea” made such an impression upon me that some years afterwards I translated this play—which had earned the encomium of Byron—into English blank verse and published it in London, though I never succeeded in my efforts to get this magnificent work put on the English stage.

Another of my acquaintances in the Dresden art-world was the renowned bass singer, Emil Scaria, of the Royal Court Theatre. He was an Austrian by birth and subsequently

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became one of Richard Wagner's most noted singers at Bayreuth.<sup>1</sup> He was high in favour with the Bismarck family, whose acquaintance I think he had made at Kissingen, and I remember the impression which this envied intimacy created when he told us that he possessed a lead pencil which the great statesman himself had used. His most interesting reminiscences were, however, connected with Richard Wagner and his entourage at Bayreuth. On one occasion Wagner had invited a few friends consisting of the musicians and singers of his theatre to spend the evening at his villa Wahnfried after the performance: "We were gathered together in the music-room when it was rumoured that the 'Master' refused to be present. The reason was soon whispered about: it was because a German sovereign prince had appeared unexpectedly among the guests. In our dilemma Frau Cosima asked me to go upstairs and try to persuade her husband to come down. I did as I was bid, only to find Wagner in a fit of ill-humour at the presumption of a Duke (or a Grand Duke, I forget which) intruding unbidden among his friends.

" 'You know I am a somewhat portly personage,' said Scaria (he was a man of huge build); but I assure you that in his temper Wagner used to make us all tremble and I took to flight. As I came out of the room I met Frau Wagner, and urged her to see what she could do with her husband. She went in and finally prevailed upon him to come down. But here the incident was by no means at an end, for when Wagner entered the music-room with his wife leaning on his arm he walked demonstratively round the room greeting everybody, until only last of all he stopped before his Highness and made a stiff obeisance."

It is well known that Wagner was of a very freakish disposition, and that almost to the end of his life he retained a marvellously juvenile elasticity of body as well as of mind. He would turn somersaults, perform various antics, and walk on the floor on his hands to the delight of his intimate friends. One day Herr von Huelsen, the director

<sup>1</sup> Scaria died in Dresden 1886.



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of the Royal Berlin Opera House, was announced. What was his surprise on entering the room to see the great composer standing slantwise on his head at the corner of the grand piano! Another, though scarcely amiable, instance of Wagner's eccentricity is the following: The old Emperor William cared little for Wagner's music, but he nevertheless paid a visit to Bayreuth out of compliment to the composer, and patiently sat in his box through the performance. Between the acts the Emperor's aide-de-camp, Count X, went behind the scenes and told Wagner that His Majesty would like to speak to him. Wagner, who, as usual on such occasions, was in a state of great excitement and bustling about among the scene-shifters, asked the Count to excuse him as he was busy arranging matters for the next act. The Count, in a somewhat peremptory tone replied: 'Herr Wagner, a wish of His Majesty is a command!' 'What!' replied Wagner in a towering passion, 'how dare you to command me here in my own house! Clear out immediately!' "

## CHAPTER V

### THE GLASS WORKS

As already indicated in the last chapter my visits to Germany during the 'seventies were principally connected with business. They comprised occasional trips to Thuringia, Bavaria, Bohemia, and other parts; but my main objective was the famous glass factory of the Josephinenhutte at Schreiberhau in the Giant Mountains (Prussian Silesia), thus named after the wife of Count Schaffgotsch, who caused the works to be erected in 1842. My London firm took a large proportion of the produce of the factory; this in conjunction with my frequent visits afforded many opportunities for gaining an insight into the manufactory and observing the social life of the community, in which I freely participated. It is this neighbourhood which forms the background of several of Gerhardt Hauptmann's thrilling plays. If I devote a chapter to this particular phase of my German memories it is because the factory in question was in many ways typical of the patriarchal condition of industry prevailing in those parts and which is no more likely to be reproduced than the type of monarch I have already dealt with in Chapter III.

In those days many industries were carried on in remote country districts. Mother earth yielded the raw material, clay, quartz, or iron, the timber of the landowner's forest supplied the fuel for the oven, and the mountain stream the water power to drive the mill. The Prussian Government contributed its share towards the development of native industry by the construction of magnificent roads even in out-of-the-way places and in spite of great engineering difficulties. By this collaboration of forces it came about that wild forest districts

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were now and then, as in the United States of America, within the lapse of a few years turned into industrious beehives. More particularly was this the case when exceptional individual ability happened to crown the efforts of Government and landowner among a population which, thanks to a century of Prussian school teaching, stood on a high educational level.

Glass-making is a very old calling in those parts, a fact which finds its natural explanation in the circumstance that one of the principal ingredients of glass, arenaceous quartz, is plentifully found in the neighbourhood. It seems certain that a glass smelting house existed in Schreiberhau as far back as the year 1366.

After Frederick the Great's Silesian campaigns in which he acquired the present province known as Prussian Silesia, which had previously formed part of the domains of the house of Habsburg, a Commission was sent into the Giant Mountains to mark out the boundary between Prussia and Austria. Its members were hospitably entertained in Schreiberhau by a glass manufacturer named Preusler and stayed in the neighbourhood a considerable time. In return for the attention and hospitality they received the Commissioners offered to compensate Herr Preusler by a large grant of land, which would have considerably increased his own possessions. It is characteristic of the mental range and simple character of that class of man at the time that the prospect of having additional land to look after frightened the old gentleman, who begged and prayed to be excused.<sup>1</sup> So at least runs the story in these hills.

The business of a glass manufacturer in those days was carried on in a very primitive fashion. The raw glass was blown at a glass smelting house, situated in the midst of a forest, the wood of which supplied the fuel. It was taken

<sup>1</sup> A similar story of simplicity is related of Schadow, the famous sculptor. One day the King Frederick William IV. came into his studio and admiring his work said, "Really, Schadow, I must see that you get the Order *Pour le Mérite*." "Oh, pray your Majesty, do not do that to an old man. But if you would graciously grant me a favour, I would ask your Majesty that the order be conferred on my son." As a matter of fact Schadow's son, who became a distinguished painter, did get the Order many years afterwards.

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thence in winter in sledges, or carried by men in wooden trucks on their backs in the summer, or by carts to the refinery where it was cut and polished by wheels driven by the mill stream opposite. Twice a year the head of the firm would journey by road with his samples to Leipzig fair, where he met his customers from all parts of Germany, the orders which he took on these occasions keeping his factory going all the year round. These journeys were, in many cases, the only "outings" which such men ever had, and they made the most of them. Leipzig became for the time a pandemonium of carousing and dissipation, as it still is at fair time.

In 1838 a remarkable young man, named Franz Pohl, came over to Schreiberhau from Neuwelt (Bohemia) as an assistant in the glass works, which still belonged to the Preusler family. He had studied chemistry in Prague and at the technical school of Berlin, and the Prussian government recognising his abilities awarded him a stipend and sent him on a journey to study the most celebrated glass factories of Bohemia, Bavaria and France. He was a man of extraordinary mental gifts as well as physical endowments, for although of short stature he was of a very powerful build and of marvellous athletic vigour. On broad shoulders rested a head of a most commanding type; the large, piercing grey eagle eyes were those of a born ruler of men. Here was a union of physical and mental qualities such as I have rarely met, although he was past his prime when I first came to those parts. He was the "Superman" fifty years before Nietzsche hit upon the term. He married Herr Preusler's daughter and soon became a prominent personage in the neighbourhood. His reputation as a strong personality and a great hunter of deer spread even to the valley. There the lord of the manor, Count Schaffgotsch, in his château at Warmbrunn heard of him, got to know him, took a liking to him, and offered to build new works specially for him, which he should manage independently. This offer was accepted, and virgin forest was cleared to make room for what at least for a time became the

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foremost coloured glass works in Germany and known all over the world.

Many a time later, when sitting at night watching the glass furnace, he would tell me how the factory had come into being—how from small beginnings, almost by individual effort, all had been achieved. He told of the wild state of affairs in those mountains in days gone by, where, in close proximity to the Bohemia frontier, law was often set at defiance by a wild and lawless class of poachers, and, if need were, murderers; of his various night encounters with those desperadoes in the depths of the forest; of hair-breath 'scapes from knife, pistol, and rifle; of the truculence of the rough working-class population, mostly from Bohemia, often intoxicated by raw potato spirit, the only beverage obtainable, and from whom he was obliged to choose his workmen; and how he carried a cow-hide whip in his pocket, and if the workmen failed to obey orders laid it on their backs. These stories excited my youthful imagination when I first went from school to stay in these mountains, and clothed the reciter with a halo. At that time, however, all this had changed.

The Prussian Government, ever intent on encouraging home industries, had offered a prize of five hundred thalers for the re-discovery of the recipe for producing white glass enamel (known to the Romans and lost with them), of which the far-famed Portland vase is still the most beautiful example extant. Herr Pohl solved this problem, together with many others, and in the exultation of his triumph published the formula and gained the prize. Had he kept it a secret this alone would have brought him a large fortune, but those were days in which enthusiasm for their vocation made people often overlook the more practical aspects of self-interest. The reputation of the works grew, and King Frederick William IV. and the Emperor Frederick (when still Crown Prince) paid them a visit and partook of the director's hospitality.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I remember piloting the late Grand Duke of Hesse over the glass-house one day when he came incognito with his son, the present Grand Duke, and his daughter, now Empress of Russia.

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When I came to the factory it was in the height of its prosperity. Two well-kept inns welcomed the traveller with excellent food and wines; picturesque roomy cottages, in what is known as the "Black Forest" style, with garden attached, were dotted over hill and dale and tenanted by the workmen, many of whom owned them as their property. A picturesque shooting-house with an ample rifle-range was at the service of the workmen, most of whom belonged to a uniformed rifle guild, which held two annual meetings.

There were carefully laid-out grass plots with ground set apart for various kinds of rare pheasants, which could be seen disporting themselves under wire netting; splashing fountains, and tiny waterfalls issuing from the rocks in streamlets which were replete with trout, as was also the mountain stream which meandered through the village. These were features which could not fail to strike the visitor who came to this model village situated in the midst of forests two thousand feet above the level of the sea.

At that time the demand for the products of the factory from England and the United States alone often exceeded the supply. Thus sometimes it was almost a favour for merchants to be supplied with goods. I have known buyers from New York come all the way only to be told that their orders could not be accepted. The German home market, upon which I understand the factory now mainly depends, had not risen in those days.

But of greater interest than the dry data of commercial prosperity were the social conditions prevailing, which, as already indicated, were of a patriarchal nature. The relations between workmen and work-giver were then such as are scarcely possible to-day. In this respect the conditions of the Josephinenhuette were even in those days exceptional, for they were due to the genial initiative of one man.

There was a strong element of what Nietzsche calls the "human all too human" to be found in those hills. On certain occasions a spirit of social goodwill and appreciation would stand forth in such a manner as I have never seen

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elsewhere under like conditions. Thus on the birthday of the director the village school children arrived bearing flowers and sang a chorale, followed by the recitation of a congratulatory poem. Then came the leading officials of the factory in silk hats, white ties, and black dress-coats—worn only at birthdays, weddings, and funerals—to express their good wishes. They were entertained at dinner in the evening. I have known a special dinner to be given in honour of a person whose birthday happened to occur during his visit to the factory. The dinner was set for the previous evening, and its purpose was kept secret from the guest. Quite unexpectedly, at the stroke of midnight, the strains of a hymn were heard outside. A band stood out in the snow on a bitterly cold January night. It consisted of the decorators of the factory, musicians nearly all of them. They had spontaneously assembled to testify their appreciation of the “birthday child’s” activity which had contributed to the prosperity of the factory.

The musicians were invited to join the party over a glass of Rhine wine, and a spirit of conviviality soon became general. Even the musical instruments—the cornet, the horn, the trombone, and the basses—which had been nearly frozen under the influence of fifteen degrees of cold, and had emitted strange discordant sounds, thawed in the congenial surroundings and played their part vigorously into the small hours of the morning. Then the drummer with his marrow-stirring flat side-drum, which he had beaten “before Paris” in a Grenadier regiment, finished the evening’s entertainment by beating the “tattoo”!

A gospel of efficiency had gone forth from one, who, thorough and proficient in everything he undertook, tolerated no dilettantism, and under whose supervision all had to be done thoroughly from start to finish. In the same way as the little barefooted boy who had tended the geese was taken into the *atelier* and set to drawing for a couple of years before he was allowed to take a hand in decorating a piece of glass, nobody was thought fit to handle a gun who had not first learnt

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to clean it with the skill of a gunmaker, or to ride a horse without knowing how to put on harness and saddle, and, if needed, groom the animal. The director's own son set an example in all this. There was hardly a form of mechanical work for which a skilled expert could not have been found in the village of Schreiberhau; metal casting, gun making, watch making, photography, even violin construction. That nearly every third person in the village was proficient on one or more musical instruments was not peculiar to the village of Schreiberhau; it is generally characteristic of those parts.

The result of this schooling produced an exceptional spirit of emulation and interest on the part of the workmen for their work. They took a genuine pride in their labour. It continually happened that samples of glass or pottery from other countries—China, Japan, France, or England—would arrive at the factory as models to work from or to improve upon. I have known a whole *atelier* of twenty decorators kept going for several years on a single French pattern: an order running into some thousands of pounds. It was highly gratifying to watch the interest taken by workmen, whether decorators, glass-cutters, or glass-blowers, in such foreign samples, and to see their anxiety to improve upon the work of others. There was no eight hours' work gospel among these men. They would toil far into the night if it was a case of securing an order which otherwise might have been given to another manufacturer. This spirit of emulation and pride in their labour brought about cordial relations between the workmen and the directing heads of the factory. Some of these were passionate *Jäger* (sportsmen), and as the director of the works had some shooting in the hills and rented excellent partridge land from the peasant proprietors of the villages in the valley of Hirschberg, he used to invite a number of the best workmen and the leading villagers to take part in his shoots, which were marked by true patriarchal conditions of good fellowship. These shooting expeditions, like everything else, were undertaken in a workmanlike spirit, and made great calls on the physical endurance of those who took part in them.



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The start was made at five o'clock in the morning, and it took two hours by carriage, of which a number were always at hand, to arrive at our destination. A day's tramp in the broiling sun over hill and valley from seven in the morning until sunset was an experience to remember. The whole expense was borne by the director of the factory.

On summer evenings, when work was done, we would sometimes adjourn to the woods which encompass the glass works on every side. These "green palaces of the nightingales" stretch away many miles in the direction of Bohemia. There we would gather round a fire; master and men, foresters and stray visitors. We baked potatoes in the burning embers, and now and then some trout, caught in the mountain stream, which rushed past within sight and hearing, would be added to the meal, which a copious supply of beer from the neighbouring inn would help to wash down. There we sat conversing and smoking until the midnight hour. When the moon was on high, and the humour lent itself to song, as it often did among these musical people, we would start singing Mendelssohn's beautiful part song, *Wer hat dich, Du schoener Wald*, or Friedrich Silcher's even more beautiful

Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz da ging mein Trauern an;  
Das Alphorn hoert ich drueben wohl anstimmen,  
Ins Vaterland musst ich hinueber schwimmen:  
Das ging nicht an.<sup>1</sup>

It was hard to come back to a London office from such nature associations; even the luxurious lounge of a Piccadilly club-house failed to fill the void which their memory recalled.

The director of the works had been to Paris and seen how the *atelier* system in vogue there had stimulated the energies of the individual workman, and he introduced it into the Silesian hills with marked success for the time being. Decorators who showed ability were encouraged to start *ateliers* of their own. They drew apprentices round them and the work

<sup>1</sup> Old German ballad of a home-sick Swiss soldier in garrison at Strasburg who is supposed to desert through hearing the Swiss Alpine horn and is condemned to death.

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of each *atelier* bore the hall-mark of the master. Thus a high degree of efficiency was obtained and contributed to the prosperity of the factory. The best among the decorators built houses of their own, the freehold being readily granted by Count Schaffgotsch, the ground landlord. They became prosperous and able to send their sons to the technical high schools, some even to the University. Two distinguished professors of the University of Breslau—one of medicine, the other of geography—were sons of a friend of mine who had begun life as a decorator at the Josephinenhütte, had ultimately become manager, and was able by a life of self-denial to save enough money to provide a first-class education for his children.

I used to visit these *ateliers*, distributed through the village miles in extent, where the snow lies on the ground for four or five months of the year. I do not remember calling at one single workman's dwelling during all the years of my connection with those parts in which the conditions of order and cleanliness were not as complete as they were in the hospitable mansion of the director of the works in which I was guest. Staying there for weeks at a time I took part in the social life of the workmen, whether glass-blowers, decorators, or counting-house officials, and I still reckon those days among the happiest of my life. There were rifle meetings in the spring and autumn, a gymnastic society, a fire brigade, and pedestrian tours over the mountains in the summer. Concerts were given all the year round, since many of the working men, as aforesaid, were proficient musicians on more than one instrument. In the winter there were amateur theatricals, dances, and popular lectures on scientific subjects, in all of which the director and his family and those of other manufacturers in the neighbourhood took part with the workmen, and nowhere have I ever met with greater decorum and courtesy than here. Only one instance of female drunkenness came to my knowledge in the course of all the years that I visited these parts, and this was a case of a poor creature, the prettiest girl of the village, who became a divorced outcast, habitual drunkenness furnishing a plea for divorce in Germany.

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The high standard of education among the *employés* made the best of them fit company for people in any sphere of life, the more so as it was often joined to a rare amount of tact and balance of character. The offensive idiosyncrasies of the modern *parvenu* element in Germany, even in high circles, were unknown in my time in those hills. A sister of a friend of mine, a Silesian countess, married a sculptor who came of a family of Bavarian peasants. She told me that the relations of her sister's husband, whom she had visited in their village, were in their way as much "aristocrats" as any of the nobility. This testimony could well have found its application to the best of those with whom I came into contact in these Silesian hills.

One of the most remarkable instances of cultivation of mind combined with steadiness of character I have ever met with in a humble sphere of life was that of a man at this glass factory. His weekly wages never exceeded fifteen shillings, yet such were the possibilities of a well-behaved factory hand under the conditions then prevailing that, in common with many of his fellow workmen, he lived in his own cottage in the shade of a beautiful pine forest. Not very far from his abode was another cottage on the crest of a hill with a glorious view of the valley below and the range of mountains beyond. It had belonged to an old packer of the factory, who ultimately sold it to a Herr von Ende, a chamberlain of the Emperor William I., who lived there for many years in the summer months with his wife and family.

Not being robust enough for glass-blowing, his original occupation, my friend had become a jack-of-all-trades. He kept the chemicals used at the factory, and assisted the director of the works in the cultivation of his hobbies, among which were pheasant-rearing and artificial trout-breeding. From 50,000 to 100,000 trout were annually hatched and turned into the mountain stream facing his office. His employer had given him some pheasants, among which were so-called silver and gold pheasants, the rare Japanese variety known as the "Lady Amherst," and from these specimens he had

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bred a number of birds, which were to be seen disporting themselves in a wire network (*volière*) near his cottage.

When about to marry he chose the one of two sisters whom, as he told me, he had observed to be the more dexterous in milking the cows, although, independently of this useful accomplishment, he might have preferred the other. Among his household goods was a dressing-gown, which he had bought with the money saved by going without sugar in his coffee for a considerable time. He was a great reader, having mastered a number of scientific subjects by subscribing for various text-books. He had saved money, which was in the bank, and had a plentiful supply in his pocket, for when now and then I made an excursion in the mountains for days together and took him with me, I noticed that he carried several gold ducats in a leather pouch in case I should run short of cash.

I made sleigh trips with him before bob-sleighbing, as a sport, was thought of, either in Switzerland or Germany. We started in the evening, plodding through the snow up the mountains until we reached one of the so-called "*Bauden*," or châteaux, the "*Schlesische*," or "*Peter Baude*," which were more than four thousand feet above sea level. There we took our supper, passed the night, and at dawn came down on our sleighs at a neck-breaking pace ; sometimes making the distance it had taken us nearly two hours to climb the previous evening in from eight to ten minutes.

In the course of years we became great friends. I once took him a Scotch shawl, as a present from England, which he used to strap to his sleigh on our expeditions. We both slept in the same rough shed above the stable and the smell of the cows. He would wait until I had got into bed and then, without saying a word, come on tiptoe to my bedside and place his shawl over me. Among his duties were those of getting the money every Friday from the bank to pay the six hundred workmen at the factory, which meant a lonely drive to the next town, nearly eighteen miles away, armed with a revolver ; no unnecessary precaution in those wild parts.

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Such high consideration did this workman enjoy at the hands of the director of the factory that he made him his executor—a post he was well able to fill, since a knowledge of law, at least in its practical aspects, was one of the many accomplishments of this remarkable man. It would not have been Germany if envy had not attacked one who conspicuously enjoyed and retained the favour of his employer, who used to sit with him on summer evenings in the garden of his villa and discuss the events of the day over a glass of port. Thus he was dubbed *Der Herr Geheimrath* (the Privy Councillor).

For many years the position of the director of the Josephinenhütte was one of autocratic authority, and as a dispenser of generous hospitality he was treated with great social consideration. He was one of the most influential men in the county, a member of its council, and a magistrate with authority to solemnise civil marriages. His end, alas! was sudden and tragic. Its echoes reverberated throughout the whole Hirschberg valley many miles away. The procession that followed him to the grave was nearly a mile long. There I saw a spectacle such as I have never seen in my native country: the Protestant clergyman standing side by side with the Roman Catholic priest, united in human brotherhood, as the latter read the burial service.

A railway has since connected these parts with the outer world. The beautiful pine-clad hills of Schreiberhau have become a favourite resort, in summer and winter, of the wealthy from Berlin and Breslau, who have built luxurious villas on its bracing heights. The poet Gerhardt Hauptmann has made his home there. Tourists throng the picturesque hotels and private houses belonging to the workmen, who draw a rich harvest from the visitors. Whether any of them ever think with regret of the simplicity of bygone days I cannot say, for twenty-five years have flown since I was there.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SILESIAN NOBILITY

My frequent visits to the Josephinenhütte brought me into personal contact with the proprietor of the works, the late Count Ludwig Schaffgotsch, one of the largest landowners of the province; for a big section of the Giant Mountain range on the Prussian side belonged to him. Through the Count I became acquainted with his landowning relatives, and through other sources in the course of years with many families of the Silesian aristocracy, from all of whom I have invariably received much kindness in the form of invitations to country houses and shooting parties.

Count Schaffgotsch himself was no sportsman, and if his friends were inclined for sport they went out attended by one or two of his foresters, of whom he kept over sixty. Game-keepers, in the English sense, are comparatively rare in those parts of Germany; the forest and forest culture being the principal aim in view, not the preservation of game for purposes of sport.

Scientific forest culture is scarcely one hundred and fifty years old, and the Germans are in this, as in other branches of economic development, more improvers than originators, since the French were the first to cultivate forest land on a scientific system. To-day the Forest Academy of Tharandt is the first in the world, and forestry supplies one of the most important features of German national economy, as nearly one-quarter of the land is covered by forests. The German forester, or forest guardian, is a very different type of person from the English gamekeeper, whom we are expected to "tip" when invited to English country-houses. The higher grades among

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them have had a scientific training, an imperative necessity where the interests they have to look after are next to agriculture itself in importance : the State is the largest forest owner in Germany, and in this particular already practises State Socialism on a stupendous scale ; for all its forests are managed for the benefit of the country at large, and the revenue drawn therefrom is expended in the same way as any other source of revenue. Forest culture is at the same time a means of rearing one of the hardiest and most useful elements of the population. It is impossible to have lived in rural Germany without encountering on forest pathways or country roads, or at village inns, those fair-haired, spick-and-span, grey-uniformed apparitions, with a gun slung across their shoulder and a dog following at their heels, who form the representative type of forester. There must be several hundred thousand fully trained foresters in the German Empire, and they form the main contingent of the sharp-shooters of the German army, accustomed as they are, like no others, to the use of the rifle all their life. But even in peace they are still at war : a scientific war, carried on unremittingly against the natural enemies of those they are called to look after, and whom they cherish as only a German lover of nature can cherish—his trees ! Between the years 1772–87 three million pine-trees were destroyed by the *Borkenkäfer* (*Scolytidæ*) in the Hartz Mountains alone, and in the years 1857–62 the same insects ravaged 170,000 acres of forest land in East Prussia. Here it is that the German forester with his scientific training has worked wonders in the cause of economic progress. So thorough has been his activity that the observant stranger in his wanderings on the mountain-side meets his handiwork everywhere. Not until you reach those high regions in which trees can no longer be cultivated is there a spot to be seen in which his handiwork is not visible in the rows of saplings in different stages of growth. Everywhere the word *Schonung* ("Care for the young plantation") is inscribed on boards, even in the most out-of-the-way places. Nowhere have I ever seen a fence, much less those hateful notices declaring that "Trespassers will be

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prosecuted," since the land is free to everybody to roam over, even though stocked with game ; nobody, unless a poacher, is expected to disturb it.

So universally is this cultivation of forest land carried out that I can safely say I have often seen more waste land when looking out of a railway carriage window in one London suburb than in all my roamings through the Giant Mountains of Prussian Silesia in twenty years. Bearing this beneficent activity of the forester class in mind, it is only natural to find that they are a highly respected class of the community. Bismarck was fond of associating with his foresters, and I have met them as guests at his dinner-table. Here the great German landowners, by seconding the efforts of the State to preserve the beautiful forests they possess, have done yeoman's service in the best interests of their country.

It was deemed a great privilege to be allowed to shoot a stag, and above all a capercailzie, on the Schaffgotsch estate. Dukes and princes would come from afar, in the spring for the capercailzie, and in the autumn for the rutting red deer, with a special permit to be allowed to shoot one deer or one capercailzie, as the case might be ; but usually only one. Some of these sportsmen came rigged out in the fancy costume of a *Salontyroler* (a drawing-room Tyrolese), after a well-known picture by Defregger ; they excited our mirth at the works, accustomed as most of us were to game-shooting and inured to the hardships connected with it in those mountains. This class of sportsman was also disliked because of his habit of shooting everything that came before his gun, whether antlered stag or female deer. He was accordingly dubbed an *Aasjäger*, or carrion hunter.

One day Count Schaffgotsch said to me : " How is it that you never go out deer-stalking when you are here ? " " Well, Herr Graf," I replied, " I should have to apply for your permission each time, and I do not like to trouble you. " " I quite understand," he rejoined, " and I should feel exactly the same were I in your place ; but in order that you may have no more scruples on this score, I herewith give you permission once and



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for all to shoot over my land when and wherever you please." And he held out his hand to me in German fashion to clasp it and so complete the compact. As it happened, I was never able to avail myself of his kindness, for circumstances shortly after put an end to my visits in those parts, and the Count died a few years later. But I have anticipated.

These associations brought me into touch with two distinct social strata, the one an aristocratic caste, the other a new social stratum with all its possibilities and ambitions. The *Landjunker* looked askance at the manufacturer as a trader who "sells" something, whereas the *Landjunker* is himself little more than a trader, and as such one of a rather primitive order. The landowner deals in cereals and live stock, pigs and geese, and, least beneficial of all, in a deleterious form of alcohol. Even when a sportsman he is often still a trader, for with the keen sense for economy which characterises his class, as a rule he sells the game that is shot, and sells it cheaply. I have known hundreds of partridges sold at 6d. apiece, and hundreds of hares carted off in the next goods train for the Berlin market.

Another point where the landowner does not show to advantage in comparison with the prosperous manufacturer is the lower rate of wages he pays to his labourers, rarely rising above furnishing the bare means of existence. A high-class manufactory, on the other hand, produces new and valuable commodities, employs a number of highly intelligent hands, increases thereby the wealth of the community, and in so doing may bring prosperity to a whole district. This comparison does not hold good in the exceptional cases of great territorial magnates, such as Prince Henckel of Donnersmarck, who occupy a position of great social power and often derive a large portion of their income from industrial enterprise. Prince Henckel von Donnersmarck is an ironmaster and a mine-owner. Count Schaffgotsch was said to draw more revenue from his glass factory and the rise of value on his property which was indirectly due to the factory than from all his territorial domains, the upkeep of which, with his large staff

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of foresters and other officials, nearly swallowed up the gross income of his estates. The social consideration which the landed gentry enjoy is, as far as my experience goes, not, as in England, a voluntary tribute of respect and veneration for the "classes," and is certainly scarcely justified on the score of superior culture of heart, mind, or morals, for which the outward polish due to the connection with the Court and the army is not an adequate substitute. Thus the present tendency of the rich-grown German industrials to think little of their own *status* and to try to obtain patents of nobility and force themselves into the society of the nobility can only be described as one of the many pernicious forms of reaction rampant of late, which also tend to weaken the middle classes in their fight with Collective Socialism. This was not so in my time, when the *élite* of the German middle classes were staunchly Liberal and far more conscious of the dignity of their position than they seem to be to-day. They possessed a pride of their own, a consciousness of their own value, and had no desire to mix socially with the nobility. A hundred years ago a club existed in Weimar to which members of the nobility were not even eligible.

The landed aristocracy as I knew them were a hard-living race, brought up under conditions in harmony with the severity of the climate. Trained for the army, the administrative career, or farming their own estates, the wealthiest among them were small autocrats, and as such were cut off from the life of the people, with whom they hardly came into contact, and by whom—in marked contrast to the English nobility—they were, with few exceptions, regarded without much sympathy. They were also out of touch with the intellectual currents of their time, and decidedly inferior in intellectual tastes and accomplishments to the educated classes of such cities as Breslau, &c.

They lived all the year round on their estates, with occasional journeys to Berlin or Breslau in the winter. Otherwise their life was a somewhat monotonous one, exchanging visits among their own class, varied by game-shooting,

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card-playing, and, on special occasions, by abundant feasting. The pride of birth which has since given way before the alluring attraction of money, particularly in the large towns, was in my time very prominent in this class. The daughter of a noble family would not have dreamt of marrying out of her sphere. For all that, the ladies scrupulously attended to the household duties together with the humblest of their menials, and would think nothing of getting up at four o'clock to prepare breakfast for their father's guests before they went shooting; but they would have hesitated to accept such men, even if wealthy, as life partners unless, like themselves, they belonged to the nobility.

There was something barbaric, almost Russian, about these people, without the prodigality which marks the wealthy Russian noble. They were argumentative, truculent, and quarrelsome, with the code of honour of the army paramount among them, and ready to put it into practice at the slightest provocation. I have known a Count challenge his own father-in-law to a duel because, at a game of billiards, the latter hesitated to accept his statement that he had made a cannon. You could never be sure that a game of cards in such company might not on the least pretext lead to differences and a challenge to mortal combat. The "eternal feminine," with a large element of intrigue, was also a fertile source of "difficulties" and family scandals. A friend of mine was obliged to fight a duel with an officer who ran away with his daughter. Some of these occurrences brought tragedy to whole families. The following case, however, in its results at least, stands out in my memory as one with a comparatively happy ending.

Baron von Falkenhausen, of the Breslau Cuirassiers, a friend of the Schaffgotsch family, related to me an experience of his own which illustrates the possibilities of social life in Germany thirty years ago, and perhaps to-day. Taking the waters at Aachen, he was sitting one afternoon in front of the Kursaal, talking to some ladies, when a well-dressed man, approaching the group, turned to him and said he thought it

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very bad manners on his part to smoke in the company of ladies. Baron von Falkenhausen was taken somewhat aback by the unprovoked remark of a perfect stranger, but quickly recovering himself, he presented his card to the aggressor and received the other's in return. Baron von Falkenhausen immediately sent him a challenge, and received the curious reply that his opponent was "too busy with previous engagements" to give his attention to him at present; he hoped, however, to arrange matters between them as soon as he was at liberty. After the lapse of several days the Baron again sent his seconds with a message that he was about to leave Aachen, and must insist on his challenge being accepted or refused. An answer came that the stranger was still prevented from attending to his request; but if Herr von Falkenhausen would kindly leave his address, he would hear from him in due course. Baron von Falkenhausen returned to Breslau, and, as some time had elapsed, thought the matter had ended. Upon this he rather congratulated himself, as he had heard in the meantime that his aggressor, hailing from the neighbourhood of Koenigsberg, was a notorious gambler and duellist, and that he was altogether a kind of man to whom a gentleman might rightly decline to "give satisfaction." One fine day, however, the stranger appeared at Breslau, ready for the fray! Herr von Falkenhausen's first impulse was to decline to have anything to do with him, but this proved to be impracticable, as the Koenigsberg man had provided himself with a friend of unblemished character, who fulfilled the conditions required by the queer code of honour prevailing in those parts, where the respectability of a duellist was called in question, and who stood bail for his character. The duel accordingly took place, and Herr von Falkenhausen shot his adversary dead, more by a "fluke," as he himself told me, than anything else. It turned out that the cause of the delay in giving satisfaction was a previous wrangle with a Russian which was still pending, and which the latter settled by causing his servants to give his antagonist a sound thrashing. Herr von Falkenhausen told me that he

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subsequently received a letter from this man's wife, or mistress, thanking him for having rid her and the world at large of such a monster !

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the military element is always the aggressive one, or that the officer always comes off best. There are cases in which officers are the victims of unprovoked insult on the part of civilians labouring under the influence of festive conditions. Notably is this so with doctors and lawyers who have been corps students, and are ready to "give satisfaction" on the slightest provocation. I have known an instance in which an officer, the father of a family, was obliged to fight a student, and had no other alternative but in self-defence to shoot his opponent. One of the most remarkable cases on record, in which a civilian was the challenger and also the victor over a military antagonist, occurred many years ago in a German garrison town. The story was related to me long afterwards by the survivor. When a young man he was courting the lady whom he afterwards married when, at a ball at the Casino, he got into an altercation with an officer whom he may have deemed too attentive to her. The officer was reputed to be the best shot of the garrison, while his opponent had never held a pistol in his hand ; in fact, in the few hours which elapsed between the *fracas* and the duel the rumour spread that the civilian had backed out of it. Hearing this, he caused a notice to be posted in the hall of the Casino stating that not only did he intend to "give satisfaction" to his opponent, but was also ready to fight any one else who presumed to doubt his courage. When the encounter took place the officer fired first, and hit his antagonist in the groin. In falling the latter discharged his pistol, and, as fate would have it, mortally wounded the officer. This duel caused great popular excitement at the time, and nearly led to a riot between the military and the civilians in the town.

There is a considerable section of the Silesian nobility which takes life more seriously than the sporting and duelling fraternity, and is consequently more in touch

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with the spirit of the age. It is not without interest to note that whereas these families are mainly Protestants, the majority of those I have hitherto referred to are Roman Catholics. They are mostly the least wealthy of their class, and farm their own estates on scientific principles, in which occupation they develop a high degree of efficiency. The head of the family is usually assisted by a so-called inspector, who has studied agricultural science at one of the many technical high schools, and has thus had the benefit of an excellent all-round education. He takes his meals with the family, and, though often of humble birth, in many cases becomes the trusted friend and adviser of the family. I have met several such inspectors when on shooting excursions, and it was a revelation to me to note the wide cosmopolitan extent of their scientific knowledge as applied to the farming of land and the raising of stock.

Landowners of this class have often had a legal training which fits them for an administrative career; they also take a keen interest in politics. Some of these families have produced eminent men in the parliamentary and administrative annals of Prussia. A prominent instance of such a family is that of the Counts Bethusy-Huc, one of whom was a distinguished parliamentarian in Bismarck's time. The Bethusy-Hucs are one of those rather numerous families distributed throughout Prussia whose names proclaim their French ancestry. Many of them still carry traces of their origin in their Romanic cast of features, which mark them off distinctly from the half-Teuton, half-Slavonic type of the Prussian nobility, of which the Bismarck family is one of the most striking instances which occur to me. The Bethusy-Hucs originally came from Languedoc, and Count Eugène Bethusy-Huc might well be mistaken for a swarthy Frenchman. His wife, Countess Valesca Bethusy-Huc, whose literary pseudonym is "Moritz von Reichenbach," is well known throughout Germany as the authoress of numerous tales of fashionable and rural life. She was connected by marriage with the family of Herr von Moser, and this is how our acquaintance and subsequent friendship came about, which, I am glad to say, has lasted

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uninterruptedly down to the present day. I have repeatedly been their guest at their country-seat at Deschowitz, not far from Myslowitz, the so-called *Drei-Kaiserecke*, where the dominions of the German, the Austrian, and Russian Empires meet. It may not be generally known what an exposed point of the German Empire this part of the world forms. The German frontier as against Russia is for many miles for all practical purposes absolutely defenceless. What would our periodical alarmists say if we were exposed to a similar state of things?

When I was there first, in 1887, almost as many Russian cavalry were said to have been concentrated in neighbouring Poland as is possessed by Germany and Austria together. The relations between Russia and Germany had been strained, and the possibilities of Russian invasion were such that the money-safes of the great Silesian ironmasters were kept in readiness to be lifted on to the railway trucks and taken inland at the first rumour of danger. For in military circles it was held to be inevitable in the event of a Russian attack to have to retire on Breslau and let the Russians lay the intervening country waste; and during the "eighties" there were moments in which such an eventuality had to be taken into serious consideration.

During my stay at Deschowitz, Countess Bethusy-Huc suggested that I should avail myself of the opportunity of being in such close proximity to Russian Poland to have a "look at the other side," and see Asiatic conditions in Europe. The Countess was on friendly terms with Herr von Hamilton, the Prussian frontier Commissioner (*Grenz-Commissar*) at Beuthen, and it was arranged that I should take a day's trip in his company over the frontier. The Prussian Government maintains a number of these semi-diplomatic and secret-service officials, stationed at intervals right along the Russo-Prussian boundary, who are selected from retired officers of the rank of captain or major and must be conversant with the Russian language. Their duties are to keep in touch with the Russian authorities, to report to the Government on general

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happenings, and in case of difficulties to smooth matters over by personal negotiations; for queer things take place in those parts. Smuggling and spying are carried on very extensively, and the temper of the Russians occasionally leads to such arbitrary proceedings as promiscuous firing across the frontier at suspected persons, and imprisoning German subjects without trial, regardless of their *status*: details of these occurrences are rarely allowed to leak out in the German Press. The Prussian authorities invariably show a great deal of goodwill, even of forbearance, in their dealings with the truculent Russians, who, I was told, rarely respond in a kindred spirit. It will thus be readily understood that men of tact and experience, in addition to a robust constitution, are needed for so difficult a post. One of the indispensable qualifications required is a capacity for imbibing any quantity of alcoholic liquid, some of the frontier "difficulties" being adjusted over copious libations.

Now and then the officers of the respective frontier regiments exchange friendly visits, when drinking bouts are indulged in, and it becomes a question which side can hold out longest in the struggle regarding which Cassio laments: "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!" According to my informant, the Russians are usually victorious in these encounters, leaving the weaker competitors prostrate on the field.

I arrived in Beuthen<sup>1</sup> early in the morning, called on Herr von Hamilton, and, after obtaining a passport through his intervention, we started on our journey—three of us—in a tumbledown conveyance. The Polish frontier is less than three English miles from Beuthen, and we had not driven far beyond it when we sighted a Cossack on horseback at the top of a hill. There was something thrilling in this meeting with the first representative of Russian authority in Europe. The thought that these same mounted horsemen are spread over

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the growth in the coal and iron industries, there has been a great increase in the population in Upper Silesia. Thus Beuthen, which only had 2000 inhabitants in 1820, has now 50,000.



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one-eighth of the inhabited globe, uninterruptedly in evidence right across Asia to the Arctic and Pacific Oceans and up to the walls of China, appealed to the imagination. In comparison with the condition of things in Prussia, even in its most eastern parts, the roads and villages, and the dress of the inhabitants, presented a marked contrast to the eye as relics of a barbaric age.

On our arrival at the old town of Bendzin, once a famous Polish city, a man in the street came towards us and, as we alighted, fell into the arms of Herr von Hamilton, with whom he exchanged the usual effusive Russian osculatory greetings. He was the secretary of the *nazelnik*, or governor, of the town, and told us, among other things, that he had just sent his family for a holiday to Italy. It is characteristic of Russian conditions that, whereas the official "salary" of this man was about £50 a year, his "income" was said to be £1500! The governor, a typical Russian superior official, wearing a white military uniform with a gold-braided collar, received us with cordiality. Vodka and cognac were handed round, followed by champagne, and geniality prevailed. The governor spoke French, and complained that he was sadly overworked: his latest "onerous" task had been to take his children to school! Of this magnate I was told that his official salary was about £600, whereas his real "income" was estimated at between £3000 and £4000 a year!

Towards evening we set out on our way back *via* Sosnowice. The official in charge at the frontier station was a Russian officer in the prime of life; fair, and of a handsome type. I was told that he had belonged to one of the Petersburg Guard regiments, had got into debt, and had been relegated to this station in order to improve his finances. Such were the possibilities of bribery and corruption in those parts. Every transaction in which the authorities have a hand—from the obtaining of the passport—has to be carried through by the aid of "tips." Whilst we were there several well-to-do looking gentlemen came in, who apparently had some business to transact, although it must have been long past official

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hours. From their deferential, almost abject, attitude it was easy to gauge the subservience of the civilian towards the bureaucratic autocracy.

It was getting late when we re-started, and night had drawn in when we reached the boundary-line. This was formed by a rivulet, the bridge over which was barred and chained, a Russian sentinel standing on guard. Herr von Hamilton proceeded to the guardhouse, and it was some time before he obtained a pass. Only then was the chain withdrawn, and we were allowed to cross over into Prussia, when an insistent longing to get back to civilisation gave way to a feeling of relief—even of delight.

Upper Silesia is a great centre of Roman Catholicism, and Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* (in 1873-80) furnished a striking illustration of the truth of how little the soul of a people is really concerned in the affairs of everyday public life, or even known to some of its political leaders. This was abundantly shown by the unexpected outburst of religious fervour brought about by this measure in the different Roman Catholic parts of Prussia, a religious revival which has lasted undiminished down to the present day, and nowhere more than in Roman Catholic Silesia, where the population is largely Polish.

When I came to those parts the *Kulturkampf* was over, although it was only in 1891, after Bismarck's dismissal, that the triumph of the Catholic hierarchy became complete by the handing over of the sum of sixteen million marks of confiscated money—the so-called *Sperrgelder*—by the Prussian Government to the Catholic clergy (Prussian Law of June 24, 1891). The great statesman who had conquered Austria and France in the course of five years was powerless here in the world of religious sentiment. Whilst the struggle lasted its effects were of a cataclysmic character. All the monasteries were closed except those devoted to nursing the sick. The peasant population refused to attend the churches in which priests appointed by the Prussian Government said Mass, and the people clung to their persecuted

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clergy rather than to the Sovereign of their country. Many noble families were split up in antagonism for and against the Government.

I remember meeting a Count S., of whom I was told that he had openly expressed himself to the effect that if the Pope called upon him he would march even against his own Sovereign, the King of Prussia. "In that case," somebody present is reported to have replied, "I hope that an honest Uhlan will run his lance through your body." The Count had been an officer in a regiment of Uhlans.

Not very far from Deschowitz, on a hill twelve hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea, is the far-famed shrine of Annaberg, to which we now and then drove in the afternoon, and where I was witness of the domination of the Catholic priesthood as it still exists in those parts. It is a great centre of pilgrimages—like Lourdes and La Salette in France—and at certain times of the year is visited by as many as fifty thousand pilgrims, who come from afar, camp out in the open on the hill, and remain there for several days. It was a curious sight to watch the pilgrims of both sexes and all ages, tramping along the high road, with banners and streamers flying, alternately chanting, singing, praying, and conversing among themselves. Many had the peculiar ecstatic expression which distinguishes religious enthusiasts of every creed cripples, beggars, and children thronged the country roads.

I possess a photograph of one of these curious crowds as they came rushing down a hill in a compact mass like an avalanche towards us. It might have been the time of the Crusades for all the difference there seemed—according to all appearance—between the religious fervour we read of in the twelfth century and that of this chanting mass of humanity. They were led by, and apparently completely under the control of, a young, clean-shaven, bare-headed monk, in a brown cowl, with a white rope girdle fastened round his waist. He was a very fine specimen of his calling, with a happy, healthy, fearless smile, showing faultless white teeth; altogether a man such as Luther might have been before he

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went to Rome to be disgusted by the depraved life of the priesthood in the Eternal City. We got into conversation with him, and he told us with quiet pride that he had begun his career as a thurifer in a village church; but I could see by his whole bearing that, however humble his beginnings, he was fully conscious of the position of spiritual power to which he had risen.

We climbed the hill and entered the church in which was the shrine. Priests were busy at work confessing the pilgrims, who so covered the stone floor of the chapel that it was impossible for us to pass without picking our way between their prostrate bodies.

Part of the crowd were gathered round a little desk in a cross passage, where sat a priest taking the pilgrims' money as fast as they could hand it in for Masses to be said on their behalf.

From the chapel we passed on to the monastery close by belonging to the austere order of St. Francis, with the Superior of which Countess Bethusy-Huc, as a local notability, was acquainted, although she herself and her family are Protestants. An amiable Brother, over eighty years of age, conducted us through the long cloisters, on the walls of which the significant word "Silence" was written. He took us into his carpetless little cell, on the walls of which hung some coloured prints of saints; there stood also his bed, which he always made himself. He had slept in it, as he told us, on that very spot for the last fifty years, and would do so until he should be carried out to his last resting-place. He then led us into the garden of the monastery, which was surrounded by walls, and took evident pleasure in pointing out the beautiful view into the valley and beyond. As we passed we caught a glimpse of a handsome young monk, walking hurriedly backwards and forwards in the garden, with his arms crossed under his cowl, taking his prescribed daily exercise. His head was bent low, as if anxious to avoid meeting a human glance, or seeing the picturesque villages in the distant outer world, with their warm-coloured life, the

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attractions of which he had perhaps not wholly succeeded in rooting from his heart. There was a silent struggle here; suffering, if anywhere in the world.

When we took our leave of the Superior he responded with "God be with you" in a kind voice.

On our way back Countess Bethusy-Huc told me of the great influence which the Catholic priesthood had in these parts. A school friend of hers had entered a convent in the neighbourhood, and she had recently paid her a visit. On expressing her surprise at the change in her friend, the nun had replied: "Yes, I am no longer your old friend Mizi: I am only Sister Barbara now. It was a struggle at first to give up the world, but now it is all over—peace, quiet, and happiness. I know you think it all fancy and superstition, but what you take to be superstitions are only symbols to us. The reality is the trumpet-call of duty, which silences every earthly passion and brings peace withal in its train. If you could only feel as I do you would understand me, and smile as I do now at those things which we both used to think of such paramount importance: our ridiculous social prejudices, our innate selfishness."

## CHAPTER VII

### GUSTAV VON MOSER

ONE evening in 1879 I was sitting in the dining-room of the Hotel Stadt Berlin at Dresden when a tall, aristocratic-looking man, somewhere about fifty years of age, of singularly erect and dignified bearing, came into the room and took a seat not far from where I was sitting at the long dining-table. It struck me that he might well be one of those Prussian country gentlemen, many of whom frequented the hotel, who, having been in the army in younger days, had taken over their family estates and farmed their own land: a stern-featured, hard-living race of men, who for generations had contributed some of the best blood to the Prussian army. Not many minutes passed when Herr Marschner, the genial host, came in, and, turning to me, said: "Why, that gentleman is Herr von Moser, an old friend of your father's."

I had heard my father speak of the popular playwright and gay man of the world, and was delighted to meet so distinguished and interesting a personage, who, moreover, exactly tallied with the first impression he had made on me. For, after having been in his youth a page in ordinary to Prince William of Prussia, afterwards German Emperor, Herr von Moser had served in the army for a lengthened period, and had finally settled down as a country gentleman on his estate of Holzkirch, near Lauban, which he had acquired by his marriage, of late years adding considerably to his income by the writing of plays, many of which still belong to the staple repertory of the German stage. It was to clear off a debt of ten thousand pounds, which he had contracted by leading rather too generously the life of a country gentleman, as he after-

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*G. Moser*

BARON GUSTAV VON MOSER





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wards told me, that he began playwriting. He gave up his country establishment, took a modest villa in the town of Lauban, set to work, and succeeded in paying off his indebtedness.

Herr von Moser had come to Dresden to attend the *première* of his new comedy, *Der Bibliothekar*, since known all over the world, wherever the English tongue is spoken, as "The Private Secretary." He asked me whether it was a play which would "take" in England, and I replied that it might possibly succeed. He suggested that I should translate it into English, try to "place" it in England, and share the proceeds. I agreed to this, and began the work at once.

On my return to London I offered it to Sir Charles Wyndham, but he replied that he had seen the piece in German, and did not think it would appeal to an English audience—an error of judgment which, many years afterwards, he admitted to me that he had good cause to regret. Ultimately I gave the piece to Mr. Charles Hawtrey, who, as all the world knows, made an unprecedented success of it. The strange, if not unique, feature of the play is that, although Herr von Moser had never been in England, the characters of the curate and the tailor, with scarcely any adaptation, are humorous skits on these types of English life. "The Private Secretary" is said to have brought those who were interested in its production close upon £100,000. Unfortunately for Herr von Moser, the author's rights, through defective international copyright law at that time, had fallen into abeyance, and he received only a nominal consideration.<sup>1</sup>

But I have anticipated. My first meeting with Gustav von Moser was the precursor of many others; for his Silesian home lay directly on my way to the Silesian glassworks, and on our first parting he expressed a wish that I might never come to that part of the world without stopping at his door. It thus came about that for close upon ten years

<sup>1</sup> I subsequently gave Mr. Hawtrey another play of Herr von Moser's, written in collaboration with Dr. Girndt, *Mit Vergnügen*, which was performed in London under the title of *The Pickpocket* about two hundred times.

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hardly a year passed that I was not his guest in the shooting season, or that we did not meet either in Dresden, Berlin, Goerlitz, or at some small watering-place; notably at Warmbrunn, where in the summer a touring company of actors would give a preliminary performance of his latest play before it was submitted in the autumn to the more critical audiences of Berlin or Dresden. It thus happened that I was often present at the birth of the children of his muse, some of which were the product of collaboration with other playwrights, especially Franz von Schönthan, part author of Moser's greatest financial success, *Krieg im Frieden*, which brought them the then almost record sum of 200,000 marks (£10,000).

Every September Moser came to Berlin to attend the first performance of his newest play, upon the financial results of which depended his supply of *petite monnaie* for the year; as its pecuniary value was largely decided by the reception the public gave to the *première* at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Städtische Theater. I was present on several such occasions. Greater and greater was Moser's suppressed excitement as the play progressed. I have seen the perspiration pour down his face during the performance as we sat in the stage box; and well it might, since upon the favourable reception by the public, and by the great critics, Paul Lindau and Oscar Blumenthal (both successful playwrights), depended the fate of the play, and he was never quite sure of their verdict. However, they were usually inclined to act generously towards their distinguished *confrère*, with whom, after the performance, they would spend the evening at "Borchardt's" over a game at *skat*. Only once do I remember Moser looking on perfectly unconcerned during the whole performance, and that was when, just before the play began, he had sold it outright to the theatrical agent, Felix Bloch, for 40,000 marks. On this occasion it was not Moser, but Bloch, who was bathed in perspiration!

Those were gay times for everybody who was privileged to enjoy Herr von Moser's society, for a more charming man, one more free from conceit, and a more mentally stimulating

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companion I have never met. To such an extent was this the case that, although I was very fond of partridge-shooting, on more than one occasion I gave up my gun to one of the beaters and looked after Moser's pointer, so as to have the pleasure of walking by his side. Never have I known a more observant student of character, nor a man more thoroughly endowed with a natural gift of good-natured humour, based upon a well-balanced joyous serenity of mind; this founded upon an almost indestructible nervous system. Besides his inborn love of the theatre and his known admiration for the fair sex, he possessed a reserve fund of interest for almost every variety of intellectual endeavour. His was a generous nature. He was entirely devoid of that envious, carping, critical element which is the bane of intellectual Germany, and which finds a gratification in depreciating and minimising others, and took a keen pleasure in recognising and encouraging the efforts of all. Thus it would suffice that anybody should say something to him in the course of conversation which suggested a novel dramatic situation for Moser to offer to enter into collaboration and share the profits with a penniless author. It is partly due to his encouragement that I took up writing as a profession.

Although Moser had passed the impressionable younger years of his life in Court and military circles, I do not remember that he ever mentioned the former in all the years of our intimacy. His interests were given to things which allowed a scope for his fanciful imagination, his constructive ability, which was allied to an almost childlike *naïveté* of heart. He told me his father had been an expert in architecture, and from this he deduced his own facility for sketching plans and plots of plays; for he would evolve and discuss the whole scenario of a new play in the course of an afternoon walk. His mother was a Fräulein von Moellendorff, of the well-known Prussian military family of that name.

He would come to see me at the glassworks, enter into all the details of the process of manufacture, and make original, and sometimes most fanciful, suggestions in connection with

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the production of glass. Once we met some American buyers at the works, which led to the remark that there was something in the gaze of the average American which betokened a closer proximity of the eyes to the brain and a more intense nervous activity than among Europeans.

Anything coarse and vulgar instinctively repelled Moser. The arrogance, the prejudices, and the undue pride of birth of his own caste excited his derision. He could see no satisfaction in a life of ease or ostentation. He envied me my business interests, which he would call a stimulating, satisfying vocation. It brought me in touch with the working world, helping to produce values,<sup>1</sup> and afforded many opportunities for studying character and enlarging the mind; whereas an official career is a humdrum, narrowing affair, unlikely to remove prejudices or broaden the mind. As for the career of arms, with rare exceptions it is one of splendid misery, culminating in an impecunious old age. Moser was almost Goethean in his appreciation of things according to their value for the world at large; the practical, the productive, the intellectual, as opposed to the ornamental, the showy side of life. Even a display of physical prowess, as antagonistic to mental matter, failed to excite his admiration. Thus, when a powerful young man "showed off" in our presence by lifting some heavy weights, Moser turned to me muttering contemptuously: "The strong man!" He possessed in a high degree that broad cosmopolitan cast of mind which was a marked characteristic of well-bred Germans of his day. His idea of strength was that of intellect and character, which showed itself in self-restraint and self-command. Even under the most difficult conditions his self-possession and his temper remained unruffled, and his strong sense of humour unaffected.

In common with most of those who had been in the entourage of the late Emperor William, Moser was a man of

<sup>1</sup> About that time I was able to save two Bohemian manufacturers from financial embarrassment by the large orders I gave them for my London firm. One of them died a rich man, and never forgot what he was good enough to consider the great services I had been able to render him at a critical juncture.

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extreme courtesy of manner. This he preserved even in the most trying situations. Thinking of him reminds me of an incident which Prince Bismarck told me relating to the Emperor William, and which I have never seen in print. The Prince was walking with the Emperor through a wood near Gastein when his Majesty was suddenly overtaken by what the Romans referred to in the saying: "*Naturalia non sunt turpia*." Bismarck arranged with the gentlemen-in-waiting to keep a sharp look-out, and the Emperor vanished from view. When he reappeared he walked up to each of the officials in attendance, bowing and touching his hat, as much as to thank them individually for the efficient way in which they had performed their sentinel duties. In telling me the story Prince Bismarck added that there was something so dignified in the whole bearing of the Emperor and in the way he thanked them that they felt it was indeed a King who had obeyed an urgent call of nature.

Millions have laughed at the intensely humorous situations in Moser's plays; and many have shed tears over the deft touches of human nature which are contained in the best of them which still hold the stage to-day—"The Private Secretary" even in England. Such was the exquisite sensibility of his psychic organisation that I have seen tears in his eyes when witnessing his own play, *Der Veilchenfresser*. And withal he never wrote a line which could offend the most squeamish.

Strange to say, except the Cross of the Red Eagle, which he gained in the Danish campaign of 1848 as lieutenant in the Fifth Jäger, Herr von Moser never received any mark of favour from his sovereign. I once asked him whether the old Emperor had ever shown him any attention; for after all he had greatly contributed to the gaiety of the nation. He replied that the Emperor had his own peculiar notions as to what was a fit occupation for a Prussian officer, and probably looked upon him as one who had gone astray and had rather lowered himself by becoming a play-writer. Moser's was a proud nature, and to curry favour even from a monarch went against his grain. Thus it happened that a man of distinction

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who had made a world-wide reputation in so difficult a vocation as that of a successful writer of healthy comedies—some of which tended to glorify, in a harmless manner, the very profession he belonged to, for his plays of military life are among his most popular ones—was officially ignored in his own country.

In his old age—for he lived to be 78—an attempt was made by friends, without his knowledge, to obtain some recognition for him from the present German Emperor, who has distinguished so many authors of different nationalities. But it failed. Duke Ernest of Coburg-Gotha, alone of German Sovereign Princes, honoured Moser with his friendship.

Herr von Moser was in a high degree what the French term *fine mouche*, and he got much fun out of a quiet contemplation of human foibles. He enjoyed telling how, when he first came to the Lilliputian Court of Coburg, the Court Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, Gentlemen Ushers, and jack-booted Aides-de-Camp adopted an expectant, not to say a frigid, attitude towards him. Only after the Duke had presented him to his “lady reader” did their demeanour undergo a sudden, a revolutionary change. For then it was patent to all that the visitor was not a mere nobody, to be snubbed with impunity, but a person of distinction—one who basked in the effulgent sunshine of Ducal favour, and “stood high in grace,” as Cromwell maintained that he himself did before God at the battle of Dunbar. It was to Moser that the Duke confided the secret that he was the author of the pamphlet *Fremde Hände in Deutschland*, which created quite a sensation five-and-twenty years ago. The two had much in common—love of the stage and of the “eternal feminine.” The Duke said to him one day, half-jokingly: “Moser, I want to give you something. Will you have my Family House Order, or would you prefer the title of Court Councillor?” Moser smiled, and chose the latter, but, down to his last hour, he would always have rated the smile of a pretty woman far higher than any titular distinction. One of

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his favourite sayings was : "The fair sex ask a million of us in small change. There's the rub. If they asked for a million we might perhaps be able to provide it for them. It is the paying out this huge sum in small change day by day all the year round which breaks us." Another of his sayings was Schopenhauer's : "By marriage we halve our rights and double our responsibilities." This, however, did not prevent him from telegraphing to me on my wedding-day : "I wish you all happiness on this the most beautiful day of your life."

The following two letters, selected from many in my possession, throw a sympathetic light on the man :

"BERLIN, MEINHARDT'S HOTEL,  
"Nov. 24, 1884.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I have been here in Berlin for the last three weeks working at a new play with Schoenthan. Have received your letter, which was forwarded to me, and acknowledge with thanks the receipt of cheque.

"I have quite given myself up to philosophy. I devote the morning to work, and read of an afternoon. I hover above a metaphysical abyss, but I keep my head well balanced as an accumulator of the understanding.

"Buy 'The Philosophy of Mysticism,' by Dr. C. du Prel ; 'The Prejudices of Mankind,' by Hellenbach ; 'The Magic of Figures,' by Hellenbach, both of the latter published in Vienna.

"The last is very interesting and stimulating, but it doesn't do to get giddy in the head and fall over the metaphysical precipice. Try to discover the rhythm of your life. With that book as a guide you can do it. Do not dream too much of your deceased brother ; think in waking more about yourself.

"With best greetings,

"Yours,  
"G. VON MOSER."

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"LAUBAN, Oct. 29, 1885.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"We have only one head, and you will hardly believe how much I have had to write and think about of late, to correct and copy, in order to get my new play performed. Added thereto several trips to Goerlitz, and in between now and then a day's shooting. At last the dice have fallen, and you will be glad to hear that the success has indeed exceeded my expectations. It is a play in the style of *Ultimo* and *Der Hypochonder*,<sup>1</sup> and you will be able to appreciate its effect when I tell you that Bloch offered me 50,000 marks for it the next day. I have not yet closed with him, but must decide to-morrow. This was a ray of sunshine breaking through dark clouds. With a little time and trouble after the second performance I shall be able to revise it, and only then will it be quite up to the mark.

"To-morrow we are to shoot at Holzkirch, and the day after I will write to you again. Adieu for to-day, dear friend, with cordial greeting,

"Yours,

"G. VON MOSER."

In 1888, owing to family responsibilities, life assumed a more serious aspect for me. I could no longer afford the luxury of spending my time in the company of this witty *bon vivant*, this kind-hearted friend. The last time I saw him was in the winter of 1890, when I paid him a flying visit at Goerlitz, whither he had moved after the death of his wife. I had just written an essay on the Prussian army (*Psychologie der Deutschen Armee*), and one morning after breakfast I gave him a copy to read. I happened to leave the room, and when I came back I found him poring over the pamphlet with an agitated look on his face. I asked him what was the matter. He looked up and said: "I have been a Prussian officer myself, and your description comes home to me." *Ave atque vale!*

<sup>1</sup> Two of Moser's earlier and most successful comedies.



## CHAPTER VIII

### FIELD-MARSHAL MOLTKE

My acquaintance with the great strategist was brought about by one of his nephews—who was at the same time his brother-in-law—Colonel Henry von Burt,<sup>1</sup> one of the most generous and high-minded men it has ever been my privilege to count among my friends.

In the eighties Colonel (then Major) von Burt was living at Blasewitz, on the Elbe, near Dresden, not far from the well-known hostelry of classical associations, *Zur Gustel von Blasewitz*,<sup>2</sup> past which I had often walked during my schooldays. Moltke paid repeated visits to his nephew's villa, and it was there that a droll incident occurred, under the chestnut trees of the picturesque garden. One day a stranger, looking over the garden railings, saw an old man, whose well-worn straw hat seemed to betoken the gardener: "They say that Moltke is on a visit here. Could you tell me, sir, whether it might be possible to catch sight of him?" The old man replied that if the gentleman would come again in the course of the afternoon he might perhaps see Moltke in the garden. In his joy the stranger tendered a mark to the communicative "gardener," who promptly pocketed it. The stranger's consternation may well be imagined when on his return in the afternoon he beheld the identical old "gardener" walking arm in arm with Major von Burt! Moltke waved a greeting, and, with a smile, called out to him: "I have still got your mark."

<sup>1</sup> The Burt family came originally from Staffordshire, and John Heyliger Burt, the father of Moltke's wife and of her brother Colonel Henry von Burt, was owner of Colton House, near Lichfield. He married Moltke's sister and came to live in Holstein; hence the double relationship between the two families.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

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The fact that Major von Burt was not only related to the famous strategist, but was also at times his host, stamped him as a notability in Dresden society, where contact with the really "great" has always been somewhat rare. Von Burt, however, had little taste for "society," and in all probability I should never have met him had not a fortunate circumstance drawn me to the house of the late Professor Emil Naumann, the eminent historian of music; for, like many Prussian officers of other days, Burt was an enthusiastic lover of music. He had a fine baritone voice, trained by Stockhausen, and sang beautifully. Thus I made his acquaintance, which, in course of time, ripened into intimate lifelong friendship.

About that time I had brought out a book dealing with social and political conditions in England.<sup>1</sup> Major von Burt read it, and, ever desirous of securing recognition for others, said to me one day: "The Field-Marshal must read that." The idea of being read by Field-Marshal—especially by the distinguished variety of silent ones—was both novel and pleasing to me. The Field-Marshal read the book, and, as a token of his good-will, sent me a signed photograph, which I afterwards caused to be reproduced as a frontispiece to the English version of "Moltke's Letters to his Wife."<sup>2</sup>

In 1888, on completing my book, "Imperial Germany," I sent the Field-Marshal a copy, and in return received the following autograph letter of thanks, which has since been allotted a lasting place of honour in the German edition of "Moltke's Collected Works and Correspondence."

"BERLIN, Jan. 21, 1889.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have read your study on Germany with the greatest interest.

"There can be no doubt that every State requires a Government suited to its individual idiosyncrasies. A Constitution

<sup>1</sup> *Conventional Cant: Its Results and Remedy*, by Sidney Whitman. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. London, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> *Moltke's Letters to his Wife*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. London, 1896.

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like that of England—secure through her geographical position—a Constitution gradually developed out of the character of the nation, could never be transferred to the continent of Europe.

“France during the last century had tried alternately monarchy in various forms, empire, and republic, without arriving at any definite result.

“Germany, on the other hand, only so recently united as an empire, is an intruder, a *parvenu*, in the family of European States. Hemmed in between mighty neighbours, we are of opinion that we require a strong monarchy. It was therefore a great pleasure for me to find that full justice had been done to the ancient and proven paternal government of the Hohenzollern.

“I thank you warmly for sending me your inspiring work.

“GR. MOLTKE, F.M.”

I subsequently wrote a pamphlet on the German army, and sent a copy to Count Moltke, who again replied, in an autograph letter, dated October 26, 1889, his ninetieth birthday.

Hitherto I had never met the Field-Marshal, and, though it may seem strange, I had never even felt a wish to become acquainted with him. The great battle-thinker was, to my mind, too unapproachable a personage for an ordinary mortal to hope to make his personal acquaintance. Blessed are those who do not expect too much in this world! They are sure to be spared many disappointments, and perhaps in compensation they may, like myself, now and then be gladdened by unexpected developments of fortune.

Some little time afterwards I paid a flying visit to Berlin, whither Major von Burt of his own initiative sent me a letter of introduction to Major Helmuth von Moltke, another nephew and aide-de-camp of the Field-Marshal, who has since become his successor, being to-day Chief of the Great General Staff of the German Army.

I called at the Great General Staff building in the Thier-

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garten (where Moltke occupied a suite of rooms on the first floor), and presented my letter of introduction. Major von Moltke, after some kindly words of welcome, much to my surprise asked me if I would like to make the acquaintance of the Field-Marshal. I replied that I should consider it a great honour. Thereupon he left the room, and, on returning after a few minutes, said: "Come with me; the Field-Marshal will be pleased to receive you." We hurried through several corridors in order not to keep the old soldier waiting, when, struck with a sense of my temerity, I seized my companion by the arm, and said: "My dear sir, for Heaven's sake tell me what I am to say to the Field-Marshal." I felt myself in a similar predicament to that of Heine when he went to see the great Goethe. But I fared better far than the immortal author of the *Buch der Lieder*.

The Field-Marshal, whose erect bearing betrayed no sign of advanced age, welcomed me most amiably at the threshold of a large, oblong, lofty room. After shaking hands he invited me to take a seat beside him at his writing-table, which stood next to a window in the left-hand corner of the room. Who had not sat at that table! It was here, perhaps, that the last exchange of views on wars and plans of battle had taken place. Bismarck and Roon, nay, even the old Emperor himself, had often sat where I was now sitting. The room itself, in its classic simplicity, its lack of every ornament, seemed to indicate that momentous decisions had been arrived at within its walls. With the exception of a bust of the Emperor, there was absolutely nothing to detract attention from the writing-table, upon which there was not even a scrap of paper.

Moltke, in his well-known wig, wore the undress uniform of a Prussian general, with the blue enamelled cross of the order *Pour le Mérite* suspended from his collar. What distinction lay in this solitary decoration! His voice was extremely thin, almost that of a child. His face was furrowed by fine wrinkles, such as I had never seen before on the face of any man; but his steel-blue eyes still retained their full penetrating brilliancy, and gleamed with an uncanny brightness, trans-

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lucent as those of a falcon. A very old man sat in front of me. And yet, as I peered into his face, I seemed to see a grim War God, lonely and terrible, amid the dread rattle of the iron dice. Those suggestive words, "Silent stands the front," from Schiller's battle-poem, rose to my memory, as I gazed at the great soldier.

In a few kindly words the Field-Marshal told me he was unable to fathom the source of my apparent intimate knowledge of the Prussian army. How could a stranger have grasped the spirit which pervaded it? "Had I been a soldier?" "I had not," I replied, "though in my younger days there had been a question in my family of my entering the British army. I had, however, been partly educated at a German college, and had since enjoyed the friendship of many Germans, including a large number of Prussian officers. Lastly, I had often been a guest at the officers' mess of various Prussian regiments." "That is all very well," said Moltke, "but it is not a sufficient explanation. The matter remains an enigma to me."

For the moment I was overcome by a painful feeling that the incomparable strategist, who in his time had successfully solved so many mighty problems, should, now that his life was drawing to an end, be baffled by a puzzle of so trivial a nature. I felt a sad offender to have dared, though unintentionally, to have put so eminent a man in a quandary. Thus driven into a corner, I sought to solve the problem by telling him that, though English by birth, and absolutely ignorant of the German language in my youth, I had, like many Englishmen, German blood in my veins. Perhaps this fact, whilst it obviously explained my sympathies with Germany, might possibly have enabled me to enter into the spirit of the moral significance of the "Nation in Arms." "No," replied Count Moltke, "even that would be insufficient. I am still unable to understand it."

I had now come to the end of my tether, and was at a loss what to say. Fortunately, the awkwardness of the situation was brought to an end by Major von Moltke, who re-entered

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the room and laid two volumes on the table in front of his uncle. They were the Field-Marshal's own works—the one his “Letters from Russia,” the other “Trips near Rome” and “Letters from Spain and Paris.” Taking a pen in his delicately shaped hand, he wrote my name in the top right-hand corner of each volume, and under it the following laconic inscription: Gr. Moltke, F.M. (“Count Moltke, Field-Marshal”). He then poured some sand over the wet ink, and, after having carefully drained the last grain back into the castor, handed both volumes to me with a few kind words. Later I added the date; it was December 30, 1889.

Moltke's powers of silence imposed a leaden weight on his entourage, for as a rule he felt little or no inclination for talking for talking's sake. Yet he could be very communicative, as his extensive correspondence with his own family amply proves. Futile talk, and more especially all theatrical pose, were repugnant to him. The French, as a nation, were his particular aversion in this respect. He remarked of them: “They mistake words for deeds, and look upon an orator who comes before them in an impressive attitude with theatrical *aplomb* as a national hero.” The German “does” and leaves it to others to discuss his deeds. One of Moltke's favourite quotations was from the writings of Clausewitz: “Everything in war is simple, but simplicity is most difficult.” If ever any one on this earth was simple and unaffected, Moltke was.

On the day after the battle of Königgrätz, an officer of high rank in the Prussian army (I am told it was Count Blumenthal) suggested, in the presence of the King and his staff, that the army should at once march upon Vienna. “What would you propose to do when you get there?” dryly retorted Moltke, and the suggestion was not acted upon.

And yet this great silent man condescended at times to chat in the most unrestrained manner, as it fell to my lot to experience, though his conversation was of the Scotch interrogatory type, and marked with Doric brevity. Never a superfluous word marred his laconic sentences, which consisted for the most part of questions—some of a technical nature.

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He asked me who would command the British forces in the event of a war? Would it be Lord Wolseley? At that date the policy of England had not entered the circuit of "Khaki," and I was hardly in a position to give a definite answer. Without in the least depreciating the military system of other countries, the Field-Marshal continued: "We find it the best plan to leave the administration of the army in military hands." He was obviously well acquainted with English military institutions, and with the fact that with us a civilian controls the army under the supreme power of Parliament. As a soldier his sympathies were on the side of his profession. Thus he seemed to regret that political wrangles should prevent a uniform organisation of the French army. But his greatest impartiality—what the Germans call "objectivity," for with him everything was considered from a strictly impersonal standpoint—was displayed in what he had to say about the Russians. "It is only natural that the Russians should be jealous of the German element. For, though they are deeply indebted to German education and German culture, they desire to emancipate themselves from foreign influences and to look after their own affairs. This trait is deeply rooted in human nature, and cannot be wondered at." It seemed to me as if the Field-Marshal was not without some anxiety caused by the ever-increasing power of Russia; at least so I gathered from what he said in reference to Russia's relations with Sweden. He expressed the opinion that, in the event of a Continental war, the Swedish army was not strong enough to retake Finland, which was Scandinavian by tradition and civilisation. This remark of Moltke's has since been recalled to my mind by the violation of the constitutional privileges of Finland by Russia, and the initiation of an energetic Russian policy in the Grand Duchy of Finland under the present Tsar.

Shortly after this interview I again enjoyed the privilege of an interview with the Field-Marshal, though the exact date of my visit has escaped my memory. On the other hand, the day of his death is ever present to my mind, for on the wall of my study hangs a large engraved portrait of Prince

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Bismarck with the date, "April 24, 1891," and the Prince's signature, in his own handwriting, in the margin. On that day I left Friedrichsruh in the afternoon, and reached Berlin in the evening. In the hall of the Hotel Sans-Souci I read on a placard: "Field-Marshal Count Moltke died this evening at nine o'clock." Berlin was thrown into mourning by this announcement, which formed the topic of general conversation for days.

In spite of my acquaintance with Moltke's family, an indefinable feeling deterred me from hastening to the quarters of the Great General Staff. It seemed to me it would savour of irreverence to intrude upon the mighty dead, to look upon the bier as if it were a pageant. They told me an enormous concourse of people was pouring into the Thiergarten. Moltke's mortal remains were lying in state, and the public were being admitted in Indian file. In the end I turned my steps in the same direction, though more with the intention of watching the crowd. On arriving in front of the General Staff building, to my great astonishment I saw Major von Burt come out of the front portal bareheaded and hurry up to me. He had caught sight of me from a window, and had come to take me up through a side entrance to the mourning family, with whom were gathered a few intimate friends. There he told me of several incidents connected with the last hours of the Field-Marshal. Among these was the extremely interesting item, which I published at the time, that the Field-Marshal, who was playing whist shortly before his death, won all thirteen tricks in the very last game. Overjoyed at his success, he called out to his opponents, in allusion to a well-known episode<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was in reference to a well-known incident in one of Frederick the Great's battles in the Seven Years War. The King had occasion to find fault with a certain regiment of cavalry in the piping times of peace and upbraided them on parade as a lot of incorrigible drunkards. The colonel of the regiment took this rebuke to his men so much to heart that he swore on his honour that he would never draw his sword again in the King's service. When shortly afterwards the Seven Years War broke out, the colonel appealed to the King, saying that he was ready to serve him, but his Majesty could not possibly expect him to break his word of honour. "Let him leave his sword at home

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in the Seven Years War, "*Was segt Er nun zu seine Supers?*" ("What has he got to say now to his drunken fellows?")

We then entered a large and lofty apartment, lit up by many candles and draped in black, with a small black altar, on which stood a black wooden cross. Moltke lay in state. Behind a railing a never-ending procession passed in respectful silence. Officers, apparently picked men, drawn from every branch of the service—tall, stately figures, as be seemed the descendants of a race of giants which many centuries ago peopled the primeval forests of Germany—guarded the bier with drawn swords. Moltke's head reposed on a white pillow, the skull quite bald, his aquiline nose thrown into prominence by his sunken cheeks, his thin firm lips now closed to all Eternity—the countenance of a Cæsar in death. Clad in an unstarched white shirt, holding violets and laurels in his folded hands, he slept peacefully. *Semper felix, faustus Augustus.*<sup>1</sup>

and take a stick in his hand," the King gruffly replied. The story goes that at the next battle this particular regiment distinguished itself beyond all others, and in passing in front of the King, lifting on high the regimental colours captured from the Austrians, the colonel called out: "What does he say now to his drunkards?" Whereupon the King took off his hat in token of admiration.

<sup>1</sup> The following incident illustrates Moltke's simple mode of life, and only came to my knowledge after his death. A member of the Prussian House of Lords was staying with Moltke at Creisau when the old soldier, then about eighty years of age, happened to expatiate on the high military abilities of King Albert of Saxony, who, as is well known, greatly distinguished himself in the War of 1870 as Commander-in-Chief of the Fourth German Army. From Creisau the Prussian nobleman went on to Dresden, where in the course of an audience which he had of King Albert he communicated to him Moltke's words of appreciation. The King was much gratified, and told his visitor how much he valued Moltke's good opinion. "Do you think," he added, "that the Field-Marshal would object if I were to pay him a visit?" "On the contrary, Sir," the other replied, "I feel quite sure that he would consider it a high honour to receive you. There is one condition, however, which I would venture to suggest your Majesty laying down beforehand—namely, that on no account is he to make any change in his domestic arrangements in connection with your visit." These embodied a scale of household expenditure of less than £4 a week, even when visitors were staying with him.

## CHAPTER IX

### BERLIN, 1890-91

I SPENT several weeks in Berlin in the winter of 1890-91. Professor Hans Delbrueck had asked me to become a contributor to the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, and at his house or by introduction from him I was brought into contact with a number of distinguished people. Of these I may mention Professor Rudolf von Gneist, the eminent parliamentarian and authority on jurisprudence; Heinrich von Sybel, the historian; and Count Sholto Douglas, at that time reputed to be a great friend of the Emperor. In after years, when I again happened to be in Berlin, I met on different occasions at Professor Delbrueck's house, the leading *coryphæi* of the Berlin intellectual world, among them the national economist, Professor Schmoller; the theologian, Professor Harnack; the ex-Jesuit, Count Hoensbroeck; Admiral Tirpitz, the present chief of the German navy, and many others. I also brought a letter of introduction from London to Baron Georg von Bunsen, the well-known parliamentarian and friend of the Emperor Frederick.

Professor Delbrueck, the editor of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, founded by Heinrich von Treitschke, whom he succeeded as chief, has been so prominently before the English public of late that a few data concerning him, drawn from personal knowledge, would seem to be apposite. He is a genial representative of a class which has rarely exercised any direct political influence in England, but which is very much to the fore in Germany, namely, the literary Professor whose hobby is politics. Fixity of appointment and freedom from pecuniary cares allow them to devote themselves entirely and whole-heartedly to intellectual interests. Professor Delbrueck

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comes of a family which has already produced several men distinguished in different walks of life, and he is still further identified with the world of learning by his marriage with a lady who is a descendant of Baron Liebig. After serving through the war of 1870-71, being promoted officer after the battle of Gravelotte, and being awarded the Iron Cross, he was for five years (1874-79) tutor of Prince Waldemar, the fourth son of the Emperor Frederick. He subsequently became extraordinary, or honorary, Professor of History at the University of Berlin; he has long since become regular Professor of History, and in his turn has filled the honorary position of Rector at the same University. Professor Delbrueck has been a voluminous writer, his favourite subject being military history, on which he has written some important works, in which brilliance of style is combined with scrupulous conscientiousness of research. He has also published a series of most interesting essays on English subjects. Endowed with an attractive personality—a handsome and thoughtful face peering from beneath his broad-brimmed black felt hat—he looks more the artist (which, indeed, he is as a literary craftsman) than a bookworm. He is ever ready to enter into good-natured discussion on the subjects nearest his heart, as well as to draw around him as contributors to the *Preussische Jahrbücher* those in whom he detects a kindred bent of mind. But, even when vehemently championing what he believes to be the righteous claims of his country, I have never known him to utter a harsh word or to harbour an ungenerous thought towards an opponent—in itself a virtue calling for notice in latter-day Germany. To think that it could add to the distinction of such a man to claim for him, as has been repeatedly done in the English Press, that he is a confidant of his Sovereign, is to mistake the nature of his position, which is really based on his attainments, the consideration he enjoys at the hands of his colleagues and, above all, of his pupils, those who draw inspiration from him as their honoured teacher.

On this particular occasion, however, it was at Count

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Douglas's house that I saw most German notabilities ; for having heard from Professor Delbrueck that I was anxious to extend my knowledge of German affairs, the Count had invited me to come to Berlin and stay there as his guest. I did not see my way to accept this generous offer, as I have always preferred the freedom of an hotel when staying in a city ; but I gladly availed myself of his amiable suggestion to bring me into contact with some representative people. This he did in a most kindly spirit, and I passed many pleasant evenings under the Count's hospitable roof in the society of his family and friends. I met at his house the late Herr von Bötticher, Prussian Minister of State ; Herr von Bodelschwingh, well known for his philanthropic activity ; Herr von Berlepsch, Minister of Commerce ; Dr. Arendt, a parliamentarian known for his advocacy of bimetallism ; Franz von Rottenburg,<sup>1</sup> Under Secretary of State ; Dr. Hinzpeter, who had been tutor of the present Emperor ; and Dr. Kopp, Prince-Bishop of Breslau, Dr. Kopp, Cardinal since 1893, had come to Berlin in connection with the School Conference. He had been an influential and conciliatory intermediary between the Pope and the Prussian Government in re-establishing harmonious relations between the latter and the Curia at the conclusion of the *Kulturkampf*, and was thus looked upon as a powerful supporter, a pillar of the State, and made much of on all sides. Even the venerable Field-Marshal Moltke called on him. Dr. Kopp's career is a striking exemplification of the great possibilities opened by the Catholic Church to men of exceptional ability. Beginning life as a telegraph clerk, he had risen to one of the highest positions in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which he still holds to-day, for as Prince-Bishop of Breslau Dr. Kopp's diocese extends into Austria, where he is a member of the House of Lords and of the Diet of Austrian Silesia. His is a placid temperament, showing reserve force, yet with a suavity bespeaking kindness of heart—an impression which was strengthened in the course of conversation. There was a peculiar fascination about the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIX.

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Prince-Bishop's smile. It denoted—at least so it seemed to me—a calm self-possession, a consciousness that he owed no allegiance to any other worldly authority than that of which it has been said: "*Qui mange du Pape en meurt.*" If I had not known that Dr. Kopp was a Prince of the Church, I might have taken him, with his firm mouth and steady gaze, for one of those refined French or English lawyer types—the Buffets, Dufaures, or Asquiths—men of iron nerve, the product of generations of civil dignity and freedom. Dr. Kopp struck me as a truer representative of freedom of character than I had hitherto met in Berlin, much more than Generals or, indeed, Chancellors could afford to own. I thought I detected something in his manner which is only possessed by men whose nervous system is unaffected by the uncertainty of their position. I also noticed that he was a good listener, one who would be ready to give ear to many arguments, and yet sure to remain absolutely inflexible in his own opinions and determination, which would naturally always harmonise with the interests of the great power of which he is so distinguished a representative.

Dr. Hinzpeter had been, as noted, tutor of the Emperor, an appointment which, as he told me, he owed to Sir Robert Morier, who at that time (1866) was English Minister at Darmstadt. Like Dr. Kopp, he had come to Berlin in connection with the School Conference. At that particular moment his name was very much to the fore. The Emperor had conferred upon him the high dignity of Member of the Council of State, and he had besides been nominated Chairman of the Committee which was appointed to investigate and carry out the resolutions of the School Conference. It was even whispered that Dr. Hinzpeter had had a hand in Bismarck's fall. Thus it was quite an event to be privileged to meet so influential a personage—the more so as, feeling the responsibilities of his position, as he told me himself, he was shy of meeting strangers. For one so talked about Dr. Hinzpeter was a singularly simple and unaffected person, as also was Mrs. Hinzpeter, a highly cultivated French lady,

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whose acquaintance I was subsequently enabled to make at Bielefeld. This impressed me all the more as I had noticed that intimacy with the great on the part of philologists, Protestant clergymen, and theologians generally exercised a strong hypnotising effect on those exposed to it. Dr. Hinzpeter had taken a small room at the Hotel Meinhardt, since demolished, and his whole kit, a small travelling-bag, with a plain wooden hair-brush *pour tout potage* on the dressing-table, reminded me forcibly of one of the schoolmasters of my Dresden days.

My visit to Berlin had been prompted by the request of a London publisher to write something authoritative about Germany since Bismarck's dismissal, and as I had already written a book dealing with Germany in a friendly spirit, Dr. Hinzpeter thought that I might be able to render good service to the cause of truth in this matter. With this purpose in view I had several conversations with him. He also invited me to pay him a visit at Bielefeld, which I subsequently did on my way back to England. In common with Count Douglas, he was most anxious that the peaceful intentions of the Emperor should be made widely known, and I was favourably impressed by his single-mindedness of purpose, which showed itself in freedom from every attempt to mince matters. He was indignant at the ill-natured gossip which had been current about the Emperor's private life, which he assured me was above reproach. He was most anxious for the welfare of his Imperial pupil, as to the direction in which he was likely to develop, and as to what his future might be. This frame of mind in itself formed a striking contrast to the pæans of adulatory language current in other quarters. Dr. Hinzpeter feared the Emperor might become the prey of flatterers, of a type of people for whom the Germans have the term of *Streber*, or Byzantine. Mrs. Hinzpeter told me that this was ever in her husband's thoughts, and that I was the only person outside his own circle of intimate friends to whom he had ever expressed himself on the subject. As a result of our conversations

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I made some notes of what I thought might interest English readers, but I ultimately came to the conclusion that any book on such a subject would be premature at that early stage of the Emperor's reign, and I eventually gave up the attempt. All that I need mention at this distance of time is the following: I left Dr. Hinzpeter with the impression that he considered the supreme task of Germany to lie in the reconciliation of the many antagonisms which still divided the nation, which, though politically united through the genius of Bismarck, was still very far from what it might become as a leader of civilisation. Thus it was not so much the expansion of the Empire as the making of the Fatherland itself more comfortable (*wohnlich*) than it had hitherto been for the masses of the German people which was the problem calling for solution, in the spirit of John Bright, whose aspirations were:

"Crowns, coronets, mitres, pomp of war, wide colonies, and a huge empire are, in my view, trifles light as air, unless with them you have a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of the people; palaces, stately mansions, do not make a nation. The nation in every country dwells in the cottage, and unless the light of your Constitution can shine there, rely upon it you have yet to learn the duties of government."<sup>1</sup>

That Dr. Hinzpeter's sentiments must have been somewhat of this character is, I think, evident from the following letter, one of several which he wrote to me in English shortly afterwards:

"DEAR MR. WHITMAN,

"What I meant is this: the German race in all its different tribes entered a new period with the introduction of the Christian Faith. They received the Christian doctrine in the Roman Catholic form. The Roman Catholic Church brings to them with the Christian doctrine the whole Roman civilisation, from the leathern shoes to the speeches of Ovid and the philosophy of Aristotle. Even the Roman Civil Laws are forced more or less on all German tribes.

<sup>1</sup> *Sayings of John Bright*, by Cecil Wedmore. Headley Brothers, London.

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“The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, reigns with absolute power over all the branches of national life—private and public. The German race spent seven to eight centuries in devouring and assimilating the whole Roman civilisation brought to her by the Roman Catholic Church. These centuries were her schooldays, during which no original German idea was or could be produced. Such production could only begin with the emancipation of the German race from the bondage of the Roman Church.

“This emancipation of the German mind and the German life could only be effected in the German country where the bondage was the strictest, where the assimilation of Roman civilisation through the nearest connection was the fullest, and where through all this the development of the real German spirit and nature had not been hindered, but favoured—that is, the centre of the German Empire itself.

“The so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century was nothing else but the first independent step of the German mind in the world of ideas, the first self-assertion of the German intellectual will, and it required great energy, with a high degree of independence of thought and character, to break through the powerful tradition of centuries in order to make this first step.

“Therefore, only people in whom German blood predominated followed the example. Even with them it was merely imitative, and resisted the reaction into which every country with more Latin or Polish population (though at first carried along with others) fell sooner or later back under the guardianship of the Roman Catholic Church.

“Now the solution of the so-called social question will be—that is my opinion—the second assertion of the German mind in the world of ideas. It will require the same degree of independence of thought and will. I think the new German Empire has been created for this purpose and this only, no other. . . .

“Yours truly,  
“ (Signed) DR. HINZPETER.

“BIELEFELD, 3/2/91.”



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Two years afterwards I received the following letter :

"DEAR MR. WHITMAN,

"I did not like to write and thank you before I had found time at least to read what you were so kind as to send me. I hope you will approve of my reflections and pardon my otherwise unpardonable silence. And now that I have read it I can find no better form for my impressions than the statement that I regret more than ever your not having published your last book, and that you have even given up writing about Germany at all.<sup>1</sup> I understand perfectly well how for the moment the temptation to do so cannot be strong, but I hope you will live to see times more congenial to you, and then paint them to your countrymen in order to enable them to appreciate the sayings and doing of their nearest cousins.

"For my own part, for the short time I have to live, I shall always be happy, very happy, to meet you anyhow and anywhere.

"With sincerest regards,

"Yours truly,

"(Signed)

DR. HINZPETER.

"BERLIN, 26/1/93."

It is not without a certain significance to recall the atmosphere which prevailed in high circles in Berlin at that particular time—the first winter of the post-Bismarck era. The Prince had not yet started the campaign of open hostility to his successor which was to burst forth with such vehemence a few months later. Thus the feeling of general relief which had succeeded his dismissal was still unalloyed with what subsequently became a sentiment of *malaise*, of uncertainty as to what might take place from one day to another. The new brooms were busy and to all appearance doing their work efficiently. The School Conference was one of the inward signs of their ever-increasing activity, and it made quite a

<sup>1</sup> Reference to an offer which I had received from an English publisher to write a book on German affairs since Bismarck's dismissal, and my final decision not to publish what I had written.

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stir at the time. The problem of the education of the young has attracted some of the greatest of human minds; in modern times I need only note the names of Pestalozzi, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Kant, Goethe, and Herbert Spencer. Thousands of publications are devoted to the discussion of education every year in Germany. All this, however, was suddenly held to be inadequate, even grossly defective. Everything was to be changed, although education under the old *régime* had spread the renown of German thoroughness all over the world, and led to the coining of the phrase that "the Prussian schoolmaster had won the battle of Sadowa." A queer epoch was that of this School Conference, and some queer fish were called upon to take part in it. About the same time Germany, or rather Berlin, was declared to be the *Hort des Welt-Friedens*, the arbiter, the guardian of the peace of the world; but people were not informed how it had come about that upon Berlin, of all places, and not London, Washington, St. Petersburg, or Rome, had devolved the rôle of Dispenser of Universal Peace or Harbinger of War. The world was simply asked to accept it as a dictum that such was indeed the case; and the satisfaction over this rosy aspect of affairs found its expression in a "delirium of delight," an "orgy of ecstasy" in high places,<sup>1</sup> which was destined to last for a number of years.

About this time I received a significant letter from my friend, Colonel von Burt, already repeatedly mentioned in these pages, the contents of which scarcely tallied with an optimistic estimate of the situation. He urged me to read that section of Treitschke's "Prussian History" which deals with the reign of Frederick William IV. He said: "If you read it carefully you will find certain parallels with the present situation which must awaken the fear that Germany is in for

<sup>1</sup> It might be considered characteristic of this particular time, immediately following the dismissal of Bismarck, that one often met in conversation the quotation of Homer's hackneyed tag, "Ὀὐκ ἀγαδὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἰς κοίρανός ἐστω." People were busy drawing comparisons between the first years of the reign of the Great Elector, of Frederick the Great, and the present.

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another such period of political vacillation and unsteadiness of aim as marked that unfortunate monarch's reign." This was twenty-two years ago.

Before I left Berlin Herr von Bötticher sent me as a parting memento a most interesting photograph of himself and Bismarck taken together in the old Reichstag lobby. Herr von Bötticher is standing beside Bismarck, who is seated on a bench immediately beneath a medallion portrait of the patriotic writer, Paul Pfizer, under which the following quotation from his writings is inscribed :

Das heiligste Recht einer Nation ist das,  
Als solche zu bestehen und anerkannt zu werden.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The most sacred right of a nation is to subsist and be recognised as such."

## CHAPTER X

### PRINCE BISMARCK

My acquaintance with Prince Bismarck began in 1891, and dates therefore from a time when he was already in retirement. In January of that year I was on the point of leaving Berlin when I received a telegram from Baroness Deichmann, of London, an intimate friend of the Bismarck family. At her suggestion I sent the Prince a copy of my book, "Imperial Germany," and in return received an invitation to come to Friedrichsruh. My first visit ended with a kindly request to come again; my second brought the expression of a hope that I should never return to Germany without knocking at the *Schloss* door of Friedrichsruh. Thus between the years 1891-98 I was the guest of Prince Bismarck and his family on nine or ten occasions. On July 30, 1898, I started for Friedrichsruh in the hope of seeing him once more, only to find on my arrival that he had passed away during the preceding night.

These experiences are told in detail in my "Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck."<sup>1</sup> Here it is only necessary to treat of my personal impressions of the man who made modern Germany as he was when resting from toil and a spectator of the working of the great political machine he had created.

A first visit to Friedrichsruh was well calculated to impress the traveller with the importance of Prince Bismarck. The express trains from Berlin to Hamburg tore through the little country station, except when they carried anybody on a visit to the Prince at his personal invitation. Then they stopped,

<sup>1</sup> J. Murray, London, 1902.

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and many were the heads thrust through the carriage windows to learn who was thus honoured. When I had descended and handed my bag to a servant, who waited on the platform, I was conducted to a carriage ; but before I could enter it two tall, imposing-looking men approached down the road, and a minute later Prince Bismarck and his son, Count Herbert Bismarck, were bidding me welcome in perfect English. The carriage went off with my baggage, while we walked on together by road to the Schloss, which stands but a short distance from the station.

The Prince wore the familiar black felt hat and a double-breasted black frock-coat. He looked more robust than when I had last seen him eleven years before on the way to Kissingen, alighting from a railway carriage. Then he stooped as he walked with the support of a stick. His complexion in particular had a rosy freshness. An elderly, military-looking man, whose erect gait told of many years passed in active service, was walking by my side apparently in the best of health and spirits. During the last forty years the world has been made acquainted, by painting and photography, with the features of Bismarck. The portraits by Lenbach are familiar enough, and among the photographs I am disposed to give the preference to a profile reproduced from a Berlin picture in this volume. This gives neither the breadth of the countenance nor the expression of the eyes, but in no other are the strength and symmetry of the countenance so well shown, nor does one find elsewhere so good a representation of the full and perfect curve from the front to the back of the head, which ends with a bold sweep to the neck. The shaggy, beetling brow shelters the glance of the piercing eyes. The large but well-shaped ears lie back against the skull in an almost perpendicular line, which gives a certain truculence to them. Bismarck's ears were perfectly poised. Nose and chin were almost parallel in outline, their contour being only broken by the curve of the moustache. The Prince's ears had something of what the Germans, in their sporting phraseology, call *Lauscher* (listeners)—the ears of the deer

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of the forest. The German Michel in the past had been sadly deficient in the sense of hearing. He was often deaf to what was going on in the world until foreign horsemen let their steeds graze loose on German fields. Here was a man whose hearing was so acute that, to quote an old German saying: "He could hear the grass grow."

Such was Bismarck as I saw him on my first visit, although one gathered one's impressions of him more slowly in the course of repeated visits. When he talked the firm lines of the mouth showed beneath the moustache, revealing a set of small, regular teeth, which he retained almost intact to the last. Bismarck's hands might have been those of a man of fifty, so little did they bear the marks of age. Tall as he was, his feet were small; only among Circassians have I seen such a delicate foot carrying so weighty a man. One day at Kissingen, in 1892, when I was walking with him, he complained of something having got into his boot. He sat down on the bench and took off one of the high-topped Wellington boots which he always wore, and I found myself wondering at the extreme smallness of a foot in which more than seventy years of boot-wearing had produced no alteration of the original shape. When he was not in uniform, or at Varzin, where he sometimes wore a grey-green shooting-jacket and a cap of the same material with lappets and ribbon to let down and tie over the ears in cold weather, he donned the conventional double-breasted black frock-coat, together with a black waistcoat, black trousers, and a white or cream-coloured scarf or cravat, apparently going twice round the neck—a dress much like that peculiar to German Protestant clergymen. Evening dress was worn in his family only once a year—on his birthday. New-fangled ideas of attire and adornment were never to his liking. Extreme simplicity of dress, as of speech, was second nature with him. He always looked extremely neat. His clean-shaven face (shaving was a function he performed himself down to his last days), in addition to his rosy complexion, gave him a peculiarly tidy and healthy look. Next to his skin he wore an unstarched white linen

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shirt, no flannel or undervest of any kind. His physician, Dr. Schweninger, did not approve of flannel underclothing. In January 1892, on a bitterly cold day, I accompanied Prince Bismarck in a sleigh drive near Friedrichsruh. I noticed that where his fur was open in front he had nothing but a linen shirt between the bare skin and a biting easterly wind. Nevertheless he told me that I was too thinly clad, and, before starting, insisted on my putting one of his thick overcoats over my own.

Biographers have been prone to dwell on Bismarck's physical strength, and he has been caricatured as the "strong man" of the circus. So far as power of sinew, enormous vitality, abnormal capacity for work, and powers of digestion go, Bismarck was undoubtedly a very strong man. But one's impression was not of strength, but rather of the symmetry of his figure. As Schweninger said one day: "Strength is a relative term; balance—the harmony of every organ—is the principal thing and the real test of health. We are only as strong as the weakest of our vital organs." He might have been thinking, as he spoke, of the Prince, whose tall, broad-shouldered form had nothing of the massiveness of the "strong man" of the circus, but suggested rather the force and endurance of the graceful athlete.

Bismarck's voice has been described as weak. That it certainly was not. It was neither gutturally deep nor loud, but it carried far—the voice of a gentleman, refined and sympathetic. In public he addressed his hearers as if they had been at table with him, without any attempt at elocution. A loud voice, however carefully trained, would not have been consonant with the refinement of the man, just as rhetorical effect would have seemed strange to his character. But without any of the arts of the orator he could move a German audience to tears. It was difficult, indeed, to reconcile his actual manner with the stories that have been told of his blunt and ungenerous way of expressing his likes and dislikes when dealing with opponents. It stands to reason that a man, as he was, of extraordinary energy added to extreme nervous irritability,

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engaged all his life in asserting his own will against others, must have had moments when the *fortiter in re* was not too harmoniously blended with the *suaviter in modo*. Nevertheless it is not easy to understand how stories have obtained credence of the "roughness" of one whose most marked characteristics in private life were courtesy and consideration for others.

Lenbach told me—and there was nobody better informed than he—that during all the time he had known Bismarck, nearly twenty years, he only remembered one solitary occasion on which he had heard him speak sharply, let alone say an unkind word to any one. A manservant on leaving the room had carelessly slammed the door. This had evidently jarred on Bismarck's nerves, for he rang the bell, and when the man appeared told him in a curt tone that he was to leave at the end of the month. About a quarter of an hour afterwards he rang the bell again, and said in a mollified voice, "You may stay." That was all.

There is overwhelming testimony to-day to Prince Bismarck's charm of manner, in the fascination he exercised over those with whom he came in contact—not merely during his latter years, but at every period of his life.<sup>1</sup>

I was repeatedly a witness of the Prince's bearing towards ladies, and it has remained in my memory as perfect. It was marked by courtesy to young and old alike, and of course entirely free from that offensive exaggeration of verbiage and manner—notably the effusive kissing of a lady's hand on every occasion—which marks the German *parvenu* of to-day, and which is not a German custom at all, but an awkward imitation of the Viennese "smart set." With Bismarck it was the deference of the well-bred man towards the other sex regardless of age or worldly station; it was part of what he would have called his nursery training.

<sup>1</sup> In 1864 the present King of Roumania, then Prince Charles of Hohen-zollern, wrote to his father: "Bismarck is positively irresistible in social intercourse." This opinion, although that of a young man, is none the less remarkable in view of the fact that both Prince Charles and his father were strong political opponents of Herr von Bismarck at the time.



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As I knew him towards the end of his life his manner was softened by the repose of age, giving him an indefinable gentleness. I never heard him express an opinion which could be construed as conveying either an intense like or dislike. Bismarck cared little for titles or distinctions which kings or emperors can give. His wish was for intercourse with what the Germans call "natural men," and in them he declared that he discovered aristocratic qualities which are now and then lacking in the "high-born." He was entirely free from that class prejudice which plays so formidable a part in German social life. Yet he had that social pride which upheld him in many a situation. Only those who knew the Prince well could understand the full meaning of his well-known retort upon his parliamentary adversary, Eugen Richter, when he told the latter that his own education forbade him replying to certain offensive diatribes. Bismarck did not mean by "education" his knowledge of books, nor his qualifications as a nobleman or as an officer, but his early training. He meant the "schooling of the nursery," the cultivation of "tact of the heart," by which he intended to convey that he deemed Richter, in spite of his great intellectual accomplishments, inferior to a Bavarian peasant or a Russian *moujik*. That to which he attached great value was the record of his family, which had served the State with distinction for generations. This was natural enough in a man who belonged by birth to a class which has always witnessed the drama of life from the stage box. But birth alone was at no time more than a passport to his consideration. He demanded individuality of character in those who were to be numbered among his friends.

When first I was entertained at Friedrichsruh Prince Bismarck had been out of office exactly thirteen months, and had apparently become reconciled to his retirement. To the superficial observer his frame of mind, like his outward appearance, was that of a country gentleman of distinction, who had once been actively engaged in politics—a period he now looked back upon as a nightmare, peopled by memories of treachery,

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duplicity, and ingratitude. Only gradually, in consequence of remarks dropped here and there, either by Bismarck himself or others near to him, was a visitor, not knowing the facts, able to form any idea of what had gone before and what was still raging in that most sensitive heart. He talked so modestly of his own achievements that it would be difficult to realise the greatness of what he had done. One of his favourite sayings was : " You cannot regulate a current, much less attempt to go against it ; at most you may succeed in steering carefully with it." So he looked upon his success as a statesman as less the outcome of genius than of that common sense which sees opportunities and avails itself of them.

At his house one met neighbours for whom he had very kindly feelings, and whom he was pleased to see there, but with whom he might not exchange three sentences in the course of the year. For the typical *Junker*, with his strong caste pride and caste prejudices, Bismarck had as little sympathy as for the type which Napoleon at St. Helena termed "*ânes par droit d'hérédité*." Bismarck's intellect no less than his heart, his sense of "fairness"—a favourite English expression of his—revolted against indiscriminate malevolence levelled at a class. Thus, when somebody alluded contemptuously in his presence to Lord Beaconsfield as a Jew, Bismarck retorted : " Yes, but a refined Jew."

Doubtless he had his preferences and his antipathies, but they were rarely the outcome of prejudice. They were invariably the result of long observation and experience. Towards two classes he felt a strong antipathy—clerics and bureaucrats. But here too there was no prejudice against individuals. His lifelong experience of both these types had given him a distaste for them in the mass, but he numbered personal friends both among clergymen and privy councillors.

Rural in his tastes, the Prince was fond of identifying himself with the class of country gentlemen. He had the instincts of the squire, but he certainly never deserved the taunt, levelled at him by the untitled German middle classes, that he was a *Junker* at heart. To talk of Bismarck as one who despised

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his fellow creatures or was lacking in sympathy with them is sheer nonsense. I have seen him genuinely concerned at the sick look of a labouring man whom he had casually met. Bismarck's habitual frame of mind might be one of indifference, as it doubtless was, but his heart was continually at war with his reasoning faculties; and when circumstances were sympathetic his heart carried the day, for it contained a deep well of pity. It responded readily to an appeal of friendship, and, above all, to a sentiment of chivalry and devotion. Hatred and the exertion of hating which politics brought in their train were repellent to him and affected him physically. Sympathy gave play to his humour, and restored him to health.

Herr von Keudell, in his "Reminiscences," attributes to Prince Bismarck a deep interest in music. I do not think music appealed much to him. His mental moods were not influenced by it. Incident or a bit of nature appealed to him. His bent was dramatic, not lyric. He might write to his wife in a poetical strain, but the descriptive dwarfed the sentimental.

Music acted on him more as a reminiscence, as the sound of the post-horn might recall to us the memory of a certain journey. *Erlebnisse*—the memory of an incident he had lived through—not music, "put his feelings in motion." Student songs which recalled happy days of youth appealed to him far more than a symphony of Beethoven. I have heard him, when reminiscent of an evening, repeating his favourite songs of student days, and taking great delight in their drollery.

No man could have had less taste for dogmatical discussions than Bismarck. Dogmatism was hateful to him; he loathed the arrogance of the proselyte and every other form of arrogance and intolerance as vulgar and irreverent. His was essentially a religious nature. A deep sense of reverence, in face of the enigmas of the universe, was at the root of his religious feeling. On one occasion he expressed himself, in my presence, with regard to the theory of metempsychosis, in which Count Moltke was also deeply interested. With Bismarck it may have been only a fleeting thought, but what

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he said on the subject was characteristic. "If I had to choose the form in which I would prefer to live again," he said, "I am not so sure that I should not like to be an ant. You see," he added, "that little insect lives under conditions of perfect political organisation. Every ant is obliged to work—to lead a useful life; every one is industrious, there is perfect subordination, discipline, and order. They are happy, for they work."

The Prince did not trouble himself about the spiritual welfare of other people. He was content to let them take their chance in the realm of Frederick the Great, where everybody is supposed to obtain salvation, in his own way. A certain dispassionate, philosophic calm was noticeable in him whenever the dead were mentioned in his presence, even when they were those for whom he had entertained a feeling of attachment when alive. Conventional expressions of sympathy rarely escaped his lips. He would speak of the dead, as of his friend Motley, for instance, to whom he was sincerely attached, by recalling some quaint incident of their joint youth, but more in a jocular, sympathetic manner, entirely free from the sad thought that the old friend was long gone. Death in itself was to him only a natural incident, and the conventional phrases about so inevitable a matter were repugnant to him. That may have been, in some degree, due to the circumstance that Bismarck's life was singularly free from the misfortune common to most men—that of prematurely losing those near and dear to him. He never lost a child, and his sister, Baroness von Arnim, survived him.

During the last months of his life Bismarck employed much of his time in reading. He always had a strong partiality for everything appertaining to the history of the First Napoleon, and read with avidity any books dealing with the great Corsican's career. He knew General Marbot's "Memoirs" and Marshal Marmont's "Reminiscences," both of which interested him deeply. Zola's works also attracted him. He read "Le Débâcle," "Rome," "Lourdes," and "Paris" one after the other, but was somewhat disappointed with the last three. "Rome," he said, reminded him of a traveller's guide-book.

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"Le Débâcle" was more to his liking. But what more particularly struck him was the fearless manner in which Zola told hard truths of his countrymen. Bismarck expressed himself to the effect that after reading "Le Débâcle" he was not at all surprised that the French were so angry with the author, for he had committed the unpardonable sin of telling them the truth.

So much has been made of Bismarck's supposed antagonism towards, not to say dislike of, England that a few words on this subject may well find their place here. Of course, nobody would expect a German statesman to allow the interests of his own country to be influenced by his personal likes or dislikes; but, as a matter of fact, Bismarck liked well-bred English people, and, of far greater moment, considered the best interests of his own country to be easily reconcilable with those of England. This statement can be corroborated by many passages in his own speeches and reported conversations, and I challenge anybody to produce a single passage in either which would justify an assumption to the contrary. Indeed, I am not conscious of exaggeration when I state my firm belief that Bismarck would have welcomed a friendly understanding with England more than with any other country in the world. I know for a positive fact that Bismarck's final verbal instructions to German officials, such as consuls and diplomatic agents to Egypt and India, invariably culminated in the words: "Do all you can to obtain the goodwill of the English. You need not even use a cypher in telegraphing, for we have nothing to conceal from them." It would be madness for us to quarrel with England or she with us. How it has happened that a contrary impression has gained ground, that the present unsatisfactory state of affairs has developed, and that it has been partly ascribed to Bismarckian traditions—this may form the subject of future treatment; it is too broad a question to be discussed here.

Interesting as was Bismarck as an individual, those who were brought into contact with him could not avoid realising that he counted for more than a great personality. He stood

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too high, too remote from a casual visitor to inspire affection. Affection demands at least a semblance of reciprocity, and one felt that, with all his courtesy and kindness, the Prince's interests were far away, beyond the reach of lesser mortals. His thoughts were engrossed by those elements which he was wont to describe as the "imponderabilities" of life. According to the teaching of St. Paul, that which is visible shall pass away, but that which is invisible is eternal. To some of Prince Bismarck's admirers, he himself represented a portion of that which is invisible—the imponderable sincerity, the veracity of an age much of which was laid in the grave along with him.

Nearly five years after his death (March 28, 1903) I received a letter from Professor Goldwin Smith which contained the following pregnant reference to Bismarck :

"The characters of the iron kind, incarnations of military force, are not those on which as a rule I look with the greatest of pleasure. But there are occasions on which they are indispensable to burst a way through obstacles such as would otherwise be fatal to the progress of humanity. Such an occasion it was that called forth Bismarck, and I do not doubt that, whatever detractions may be made, the restorer of German unity and its defender against the jealousy of France will be crowned with the gratitude of history."

## CHAPTER XI

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DURING a stay in Vienna in September 1891, I received a letter from Count Herbert Bismarck, at Varzin, inviting me in his parents' name to pay them a visit there. He said that, though he himself would unfortunately be absent, I should be amply compensated by meeting the celebrated painter, Franz von Lenbach.

I arrived at Varzin in the evening, just in time for dinner, at which Lenbach was seated beside Prince Bismarck, with whom, as I could see, he was on terms of close intimacy. The impression he made upon me was of so sympathetic a nature that it was with keen regret that I learnt he intended to leave early the next morning. I had retired for the night when some one knocked at my door; it was Lenbach, carrying a sheet of cardboard in his hand. It was apparently the cover of one of those band-boxes in which milliners pack ladies' dresses. Lenbach had given it a lasting value, for he had drawn upon it a pen-and-ink sketch of Prince Bismarck in a forester's cap. He asked me to accept it as a memento of our first meeting, and added that if I came to see him in Munich he would give me something more worthy of acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

Some months later I paid Lenbach a visit at Munich, when he proved as good as his word, for he painted my portrait in a peculiar *tempera* manner for which he had at that time a strong partiality, and made me a present of it. I was leaving Munich for Friedrichsruh on another visit to Prince Bismarck, and Lenbach enjoined me to be sure and show it to the Prince. This I was naturally somewhat reluctant to do;

<sup>1</sup> My *Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck*, pp. 70-71.

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but, being anxious to carry out his wishes, I took the cartoon one evening after dinner into the drawing-room and submitted it for the Prince's inspection, with an apology that it was Lenbach's express wish that I should do so. Bismarck looked attentively at the picture, and, turning to me with the sly smile which was often seen on his countenance when he was about to say anything pointed, remarked: "He has flattered you," gazing intently at me as if waiting to hear what I might say. "To tell you the truth, Prince," I rejoined, "I am still so sensible of the honour Lenbach has conferred upon me, that, after having painted your Highness, he should have condescended to paint me, that I have not yet troubled to think whether the likeness be flattering or otherwise."

During the next twelve years, down to Lenbach's death, I was a frequent guest at his residence in Munich. He came to see me on several occasions in London; and I repeatedly met him as a fellow guest of Prince Bismarck's at Friedrichsruh. At Bismarck's death Lenbach and I were among the very few who were permitted, indeed invited, to take a last look at the dead statesman, a privilege which was not accorded to more than a dozen persons in all, of whom scarcely six can be living to-day.

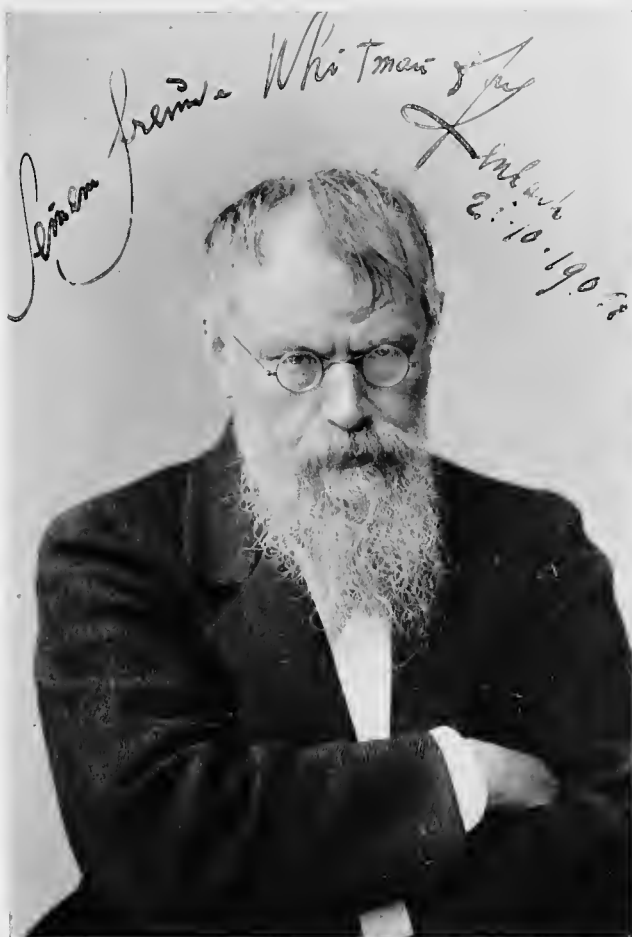
When Lenbach died the art world of Germany forgot for the moment its petty envies and jealousies, and joined in the spirit of Shakespeare's noble words which, as if coined anew for the occasion, burst forth simultaneously from the whole German Press:

Take him for all in all he was a man,  
We shall not look upon his like again.

An eminent art historian wrote in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*: "A life has come to an end rich and beautiful as that of no second artist of our time. Lenbach towered above our *bourgeois* age, like some scion of those distant days when artists mixed on an equality with kings, when the Emperor Charles the Fifth did not disdain to pick up the brush which had fallen from the hand of a Titian, and

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Rubens rode through the city of Antwerp decked in a chain of gold.”<sup>1</sup>

According to that acute observer of national life, Gustave le Bon,<sup>2</sup> the true artist, “whether poet, architect or painter, possesses the magic faculty of expressing in his syntheses the soul of an epoch and of a race. Very impressionable, very unconscious, thinking more especially in images and reasoning but little, artists are at certain epochs the faithful mirrors of the society in which they live; their works are the most exact documents to which recourse can be had with a view to evoking a vanished civilisation. They are too unconscious not to be sincere, and too much impressed by their surroundings not to give faithful expression to the ideas, sentiments, needs and tendencies of their environment.”

Many are of opinion that in Franz von Lenbach Germany possessed one of those rare artists who reflect the soul of an epoch, for his work will hand down to coming generations the dominant personalities of a glorious period in German history. Prince Bismarck went out of his way to declare that it pleased him to feel that he would be known hereafter by means of Lenbach's portraits.

The story of Lenbach's humble parentage, his boyhood in the Bavarian village of Schrobenhausen, his early struggles and prompt achievement of renown, is widely known. One day, when driving out with Princess Bismarck in the neighbourhood of Varzin, as she herself told me, the carriage passed a cottage on the wall of which a mason was working. Lenbach turned to the Princess, and with his wistful smile said: “You see that man, Princess; I, too, was once at work like that poor fellow.”

Lenbach's father was a village builder with a large family. His charge for drawing up the plan of a cottage was about one florin, or one shilling and eightpence in English money. So it may well have been within the functions of his gifted

<sup>1</sup> Richard Muther on Franz von Lenbach, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May 8, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychology of Peoples*, by Gustave le Bon. Fisher Unwin, 1899.

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son to lend a helping hand occasionally with brick and mortar. He told me that he lived on less than a pound a month during the days of his apprenticeship. Long before he died the peasant's son had become what Tiziano Vecellio was once before him: "The painter of kings, and a king among painters." But even this description of Lenbach's scope of activity is inadequate. For the painter of kings in his case did not include the court painter; but the term comprised the limning of those for whom the German language has coined the beautiful untranslatable term of *Geistesheroen*, "Heroes of the Mind." These were indeed the only kings of whom Lenbach would have cared to be called the painter. He was not impressed by rank, and, though he had probably painted more exalted personages than any other artist of his time, he had refused almost as many commissions as he accepted. He declined an invitation of the Emperor Alexander III. to go to St. Petersburg, and I was present when he likewise declined a telegraphic summons to come to London to paint Mr. Cecil Rhodes. Showing me the telegram, he said: "Let him come to Munich."

The extraordinary position Lenbach occupied in the social and artistic world of Germany, and more particularly of Munich, was due nearly as much to his strong personality as to his eminence as an artist.

Lenbach was one of the small number of great artists who followed through life the full bent of an artistic temperament without suffering shipwreck in the process; standing here in marked contrast to Rembrandt, the genius with whom he has often been compared. During the critical period in which many talented men nurse their chances of "getting on" in the world, Lenbach, whether in Rome, Vienna or Madrid, whilst working as hard as only the strong can work, yet led a high-strung life in the midst of a society composed of lovely women and highly gifted men. Heedless of the morrow, he breasted the flood of fancy and passion on the full tide of a happy-go-lucky existence. Few are privileged to wander with impunity under the figurative palm-tree where endless pitfalls,

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the searchings of a morbid sensibility, await the unwary genius. But the æsthetic refinement, the innate strength—what Carlyle would have called the “valour” of the man—carried him through all and brought him at last safely into the haven of home life. There, with his devoted wife and their children around him, he worked to the last, harder and more successfully than ever, excelling the productions of his earlier years in richness of colour as well as in power of composition and execution. The work of his later period surprised even those who had been his life-long admirers. His portrait of Leo XIII. was unanimously proclaimed to be the finest rendering of a Pontiff since Raphael painted Julius II. and Velasquez Innocent X.

Somebody once asked Lenbach what might be his price for a portrait. “That all depends,” he replied; “from 20,000 marks, which I may ask, down to 5000, which I may be willing to pay for the privilege of painting an exceptionally interesting face.” This answer supplies a key to the character of the man. It illustrates his indifference to money where his artistic instincts were called into play.

In many cases he was able to ask practically what he liked. Yet he never went beyond a certain figure, which was considerably less than rumour credits certain English, French and American artists with getting for their work. He told me that he disliked asking what he considered to be an excessive price, even when certain of obtaining it. Where an exceptionally high price was offered to induce him to reconsider a previous refusal he never went back upon it. He once mentioned the exact amount which the German Emperor had paid for a portrait. It was not excessive, and I said as much. But Lenbach replied that it was ample, that he was well paid, and that he would not have cared to accept more. He did not like the idea of receiving more than he thought his work was fairly worth. As a rule royal personages did not appeal to him, though there were exceptions. There was little in them that interested him; and even from a business point of view, strange to say, they are not always satisfactory

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customers. They want too much for their money and are difficult to please. Besides, the etiquette which surrounds them is tedious. Lenbach was willing to suppress his individuality for days together when in contact with exacting genius, but it was irksome to him to be obliged to do so in the presence of royal mediocrity.

His aim in painting a portrait was to render the dominant characteristics of his sitter, in order to do which it was necessary for him, as he maintained, to be able to understand his or her character. It is related of him that, when painting the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, he vainly endeavoured to arrive at a satisfactory conception of the monarch's soul. At last he laid down his brush and said, apologetically, that the Emperor struck him as a man who was so completely oppressed with care that he feared he would be unable to give his imperial sitter satisfaction.

Endless was the fund of anecdote and experiences concerning his dealings with the great of this world.

One summer evening Lenbach was passing out of his studio into the grounds when he saw two ladies in black, looking at the different bits of antique sculpture in his garden with evident interest. He went up, and addressing them said to the unknown trespassers in a somewhat pointed tone: "What can I do for you, *meine Damen*?" "Oh, pray forgive us, Herr Professor," replied one of the ladies; "I am the Empress of Austria, and I thought I should like to fill up the time till our train starts by looking at your beautiful villa." Needless to say she did this at once in Lenbach's company. He told me afterwards that he had painted the Empress many years previously, but she had changed so much that he did not recognise her.

A wealthy friend of mine wanted Lenbach to paint his wife's portrait, and, as I was going to Munich, asked me to make the suggestion to him. "What does his wife look like?" queried Lenbach. I gave a flattering description of the lady, but Lenbach was not in a humour to do business. He was in one of those moods in which he felt it to be almost

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an artistic degradation to paint anybody merely because they were prepared to pay him for doing so. "Tell your friend," he said, "that you did not mention the matter to me; that is the easiest way to get out of it; besides, I am busy painting my little girl." Had he lived it had been his intention, as he told me, to devote himself to landscape painting.

His dealings with possible clients did not always pass off so smoothly as this particular one, for, although incapable of intentionally causing pain, he was sometimes unable to repress the temptation to speak his mind if provoked to do so. A Berlin banker once asked him point blank what he would charge for painting his portrait; Lenbach mentioned an unusually large sum—this being a playful *ruse* of his when disinclined to undertake a commission and to avoid being obliged to give a direct refusal. "But surely that is too much," blurted out the close-fisted millionaire. "I bought a portrait which you painted of Prince Bismarck for less than half that price." "That may be," replied Lenbach, quietly. "It was a pleasure to me to portray him; but surely, Herr X—, without offence, you do not imagine that it would be an equal pleasure to me to paint you?"

Sympathy and antipathy of a personal as well as of an artistic nature were strong influences with him. Some years ago a few friends of Professor Virchow intended to present him with his portrait, and, approaching Lenbach with a view to his accepting the commission, asked what his price would be. Lenbach declared that he would consider it an honour to paint the scientist's portrait, and named a comparatively small sum, but added that if Professor Virchow had not been such an inveterate enemy of Prince Bismarck he would have been only too pleased to paint him for nothing.

When Lenbach had struck a bargain he often made his sitter a present in addition of a pastel sketch or even a finished painting. I doubt if an artist has ever lived who gave away so much in money value of his own work as this extraordinary man. For even his fugitive sketches, the work of a few hours, fetched high prices. He scarcely had a friend to whom he did

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not at one time or other give one or even more valuable specimens of his work. To those to whom he was specially attached—for instance, Prince Bismarck—he presented priceless portraits in oil. If a face interested him he would make a sketch of it, and when finished give it to the owner. If a countenance did not appeal to his artistic sense he would evince no desire to reproduce it, even though it were that of an intimate friend. In such cases, however, he would still gratify his gift-giving propensities and surprise his friend with the offer of a sketch of Bismarck or of some beautiful woman. Anything as long as he could give pleasure to those around him.

Lenbach's generosity was of a princely kind and, indeed, boundless. It was, as already stated, partly because of the enjoyment it afforded him to give pleasure to others, partly also an outcome of the two mainsprings of his artistic nature: his love of the characteristic in man and of the beautiful in woman. The following is an authentic instance of the latter. One day a gentleman, accompanied by a beautiful girl, came to see him at his studio in Rome. They turned out to be a Venetian banker named Rombo and his young daughter Annina. After admiring everything, they gave the painter a cordial invitation to be sure to come to Venice and pay them a visit. Passing through Venice some time afterwards, Lenbach met them again, and expressed a wish to be allowed to paint the daughter. The preliminaries were soon arranged, when an unexpected hitch presented itself. Signor Rombo was desirous of arranging the price he was to pay for his daughter's portrait, when, to his surprise, Lenbach insisted on painting her for nothing. He said it was no labour to him to paint a head of such classical beauty, but an enjoyment which would yield him untold artistic gratification and for which he could take no payment whatever. Signor Rombo declined to accept such a present and insisted on paying for the portrait. As both sides proved obstinate the matter fell through, and the lady in question, to-day the renowned Venetian beauty known to the world as Countess



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Morosini, was denied the privilege of being immortalised by Lenbach.

This story might well seem incredible, or it might be suspected, at least, that some undisclosed item altered its true import, were it not that authentic instances are positively without end of Lenbach's disinterestedness where his artistic instincts were called into play. So much so that those who are best acquainted with his record in this respect might well marvel how he was ever able to make the amount of money he did, seeing how much of his work he gave away and how much of his earnings he spent on others, and also on the purchase of works of old masters to adorn his palatial residence. Happily, however, his marvellous industry, his capacity for work, were on a par with his generosity. Even by accepting payment for about half, or let me say two-thirds, of what he painted—the rest being given away—he was yet able to earn a handsome income, to support a number of his poor relatives, and to leave his wife and children handsomely provided for.

To say that the magnanimity of the man was now and then not appreciated is only to state a common experience of human nature, but it was also abused by some whose wealth and high station should have rendered such a thing impossible. During his sojourn in Rome in the early eighties, a friend one day brought, to visit his studio, a lady whose beauty made a great impression on him, a by no means unusual occurrence. Although Lenbach was overwhelmed with commissions at the time, he threw everything on one side and begged to be allowed to make a sketch of so lovely an apparition. The lady came again and again, and before many days had passed Lenbach had dashed off four separate sketches of her. In his enthusiasm he packed them up and sent them to her hotel, with a few lines begging her to honour him by accepting what it had afforded him so much artistic gratification to produce ; a present which, at the rate he was readily paid for his work, represented a money value of about a thousand pounds. The lady's husband, an American multi-millionaire, felt that such a present required a *quid pro quo*, and sent the artist a cheque

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for £50! Lenbach returned the cheque, but the sketches did not come back.

To be in Lenbach's confidence was to enlarge one's knowledge of the meanness underlying the pomp and glitter of the great international world of "society." To know him intimately was to marvel at the self-restraint of a noble nature which seldom allowed itself to utter a word in anger or complaint of human turpitude. He possessed a rare strength, an even rarer greatness of soul.

Although Lenbach did not speak a word of English he had a strong liking for England. He called London "beautiful." When in need of a holiday, he repeatedly took it by coming straight from Munich to London for a few days. He studiously avoided seeing anybody, although many would have been glad to meet him. In October 1894 he came over to see the exhibition of old masters at the Grafton Gallery. He stayed here a week, and, except that I took him to hear James M. Coward play the organ—an instrument he loved, and of which he declared Mr. Coward to be the best player he had ever heard—he literally spoke to no living soul outside my family during his stay. He told me that he had more than enough of "society" in his own country.

He came to England to commune with the great dead, to delight in the work which they had left behind them. The National Gallery was the *Kaaba* of his English Mecca, and after he had worshipped daily at its shrine there came the Raphael cartoons at South Kensington, the Elgin marbles at the British Museum, the Wallace Collection and Westminster Abbey. We also went to see the pictures at Hampton Court and Greenwich. He was not particularly struck by the former, and did not care much for Lely or Kneller. He also found fault with the shabby way in which the pictures are kept at Hampton Court. He was more favourably impressed with Greenwich. The National Gallery he declared to be in many respects the finest collection of paintings in the world. I have taken him there in the morning and left him there the best part of the

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day. He would then expatiate endlessly on the glories of the English eighteenth-century portrait painters. But his admiration was not restricted to these masters. He was almost as eloquent in his appreciation of Constable and Turner. I have heard him say that the best work of Constable and Turner possessed higher merits than the whole sum of landscape painting of some countries. In fact, he did not think the world had produced their equals. His keenest sympathies, however, were reserved for Reynolds and Gainsborough. He envied these masters the beautiful women, the distinguished-looking men, that sat to them. He was amused when I told him that they had not always been appreciated at their present high value in England, and that I had read somewhere in one of Charles Lamb's essays how Reynolds was compared to his disadvantage with some second-rate Italian. Even the work of the lesser lights of this great school, such as Romney, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Raeburn, etc., Lenbach held to be superior to the best contemporary art; for they are already hallowed by the efflux of time, according to him the only true criterion of all art. For all that he believed that the enormous prices which their work fetches to-day are exaggerated and will not last; particularly as many of the pictures are not in a good state of preservation.

Of contemporary English artists I recall his appreciative reference to Orchardson and particularly to G. F. Watts, on both of whom we called. But in general he dwelt upon the ephemeral character of the art products of our time, which, with few exceptions, he believed destined to pass away, or at least to be priced hereafter at about the cost of their frames.

"What makes you think that that will be their fate?" I asked.

"Well," he replied, "you have only to judge for yourself by bearing in mind that comparatively little has come down to us of the artistic work of the past. All the rest has disappeared. Besides," he added, "take the experience of our own lifetime. What is left to-day of many of the

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reputations of thirty years ago? Look at Germany, for instance; where are K. and M. and many others to-day?"

"Well, then," I remarked, "if you have so small an opinion of the art of the present time, what do you think is likely to be the fate of your own work?"

"As for that," he said, "I think I may possibly have a chance of living; but *only* if individualisation or characterisation be deemed to constitute a quality of permanent value in a picture. This, however, I shall never know, for it can only be adjudged by posterity. If that verdict should prove unfavourable, then my work too will pass with the rest, for it cannot compare on their lines with the great masters of the past."

"How do you account for it," I continued, "that this particular English school of art painters, which you are so fond of, is of such supreme excellence?"

"Well," he answered, "you see, men like Reynolds and Gainsborough led very different lives to what artists do nowadays. They threw their whole heart into their work, and even when they were most productive they were imbued with sincerity and a rare power of concentration. Theirs was a dignity which is foreign to our impressionable, noisy age. Thus, somehow, they possessed the secret of creating the beautiful."

It was one of Lenbach's pet ideas that there is little character in our age, which is bereft of colour, costume and symbolism. Fashion forces us all to don the dull, featureless garb of mediocrity, so that the Pope and the chimney-sweep are about the only two people left whose dress bespeaks the character of their calling.

In the course of our wanderings we went to look at the house once inhabited by Sir Joshua Reynolds in Leicester Square, the dilapidated condition of which (it was tenanted by an auctioneer) saddened him. "How can such a wealthy country thus neglect the mementoes of her great men?" he exclaimed. Passing along Piccadilly he saw in a shop window an artist's palette ticketed up as having once belonged to Sir

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Joshua Reynolds, and he begged me to go in and inquire what they would take for it. "It is not for sale," was the answer. "Try again," Lenbach urged; "offer them twenty or thirty pounds for it." I did so, but to no purpose. It was an heirloom of the firm, I was told, which is still the self-same one which over a hundred years ago, when in Long Acre, sold colours to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The name over the shop was Roberson.

"Surely," I said, "that is a ridiculous price to give for a bit of old wooden board." "Oh, no," Lenbach replied; "Reynolds was one of the greatest painters of all times. And he was not only a great painter, but a most able literary exponent of art as well. His 'Discourses' are still the best embodiment of the principles of art we can refer to. The English of the eighteenth century stand on a par with the great masters of Italy, Spain and Holland; the French, for instance, with all their boasted artistic qualities, have never produced such a man as Reynolds."

One day we visited Mr. G. F. Watts's studio in Melbury Road. On leaving I asked Lenbach what might be his opinion of Mr. Watts as an artist? He answered, "Reynolds was a child of nature, Watts is one of nature's nephews," a differentiation which still placed Watts in Lenbach's estimation far above most contemporary art, among the immortals. What particularly excited Lenbach's regard for Watts, and also for Burne Jones, was that neither of them had ever swerved a hair's breadth from his artistic ideals for the sake of making money. They stood above the pursuit of gain. Lenbach had made too much money himself to think unkindly of others who had been equally successful, but he believed that there was a point beyond which no artist can go in that direction without jeopardising whatever chance he might possess of producing work of lasting value. To be *Zu sehr Kaufmann*, too much of the huckster, was the danger. "The rock of the charlatan," he said, "for in art, as in other imperative matters, the Biblical words applied with peculiar force, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'"

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The London crowd excited the interest of this close observer of human character; but the sight of the many dirty, shabbily dressed people we met in the streets repelled him. It filled his sensitive nature with pain. The slums within a few minutes' walk of Westminster Abbey drew from him the remark that it was hard to believe that such ugliness could have existed at all at a time when architects lived capable of creating such beautiful structures, of composing in stone with such sincerity and reverence.

One night we went to a music-hall. The place called forth the dry comment: "Cads on the stage, cads in the audience." The vulgarity of the crowd shocked him. The squalor of the tenement dwellings of the working classes, as seen from the railway carriages on the south London lines, had such a saddening effect upon him that he could not banish the memory of it for days. He even recurred to the subject long afterwards when I visited him in Munich.

"There must be an untold amount of misery amid all this wealth? But, after all, the English have done great work in the past, not only in art. They have given much humour to the world (*Sie haben der Welt viel humor gegeben*). A pity they seem to want everything for themselves and begrudge us Germans our rising commerce, our insignificant Colonial possessions."

In the month of October 1903 I spent a few days with Lenbach, in Munich, for the last time. He had almost recovered from the partial seizure of twelve months before, and had just finished a portrait of General Woodford, United States Ambassador at Madrid. And, according to all accounts, his powers of portraiture showed no decline whatever. One afternoon we went together by train to the Starnberg Lake, on the beautiful banks of which, in sight of the snow-clad Alps, he was having a stately villa built after the design of his friend Gabriel von Seidl. He told me that he thought he was now on the point of realising the supreme ambition of his life—namely, of devoting himself entirely to art for its own sake; that is to say, to work without thinking about money, to

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paint landscapes and beautiful children. For this strong man, who had stood erect in the presence of more monarchs than many a high-born courtier crawls before in a lifetime, always remained *Ein Natur Kind*, an unspoilt child of Nature. And in the artistic evening of his life a voice seemed to call unto him and inspire his artistic soul with the words of our Saviour, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God." Alas ! it was otherwise ordained, for Lenbach was shortly afterwards struck down by the illness of which he died.

I have left myself no space to dwell upon the varied intellectual gifts of this favoured son of the Bavarian hills. To tell of the humour which sparkled from the lips and found a lasting record in hundreds of vivacious anecdotes ; how, whilst disdaining the arts of an orator, he yet succeeded when occasion arose in swaying an audience as few trained rhetoricians could do, and impressed his strong will upon his surroundings. I was twice present with him at Friedrichsruh on the occasion of Prince Bismarck's birthday, and it was he who proposed the health of the "birthday child." I remember it was a stirring address, a rushing torrent of deep-felt words, which moved all present, some even to tears.

Such was his natural acumen and breadth of view in dealing with matters entirely outside his profession that he was one of whom it might be justifiably said that he would have succeeded in any calling he might have chosen. I have been with him when he bought pictures or *bric-à-brac*, and his discrimination was as remarkable as his prompt decision in paying what some might have thought a high price, but which, thanks to his unerring judgment, generally turned out to be a good investment. Since his death one of his Titians alone has been sold for £50,000.

Lenbach's powers of organisation made him the centre—for or against—of every art movement which agitated the Bavarian capital. To him was mainly due the conception, as well as the erection, of the beautiful Munich Künstlerhaus.

Lenbach was of stately stature and powerful build. Every-

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thing about the man denoted determination, will-power, strength, and yet refinement, especially his aristocratic hands, the powerful forehead, and the piercing expression of his luminous eyes, which at times took a haze of tenderness, rare even in a woman. His smile was intensified by the possession of faultless white teeth, of which he had not lost a single one. He used to call himself ugly, for there was a certain ruggedness about his strong features which one finds among the portraits of the Dutch masters. But to those who can read aright the outward expression of great qualities of heart and mind, the proud dignity of manliness, Lenbach looked what he was—every inch a king among men.



## CHAPTER XII

### MUNICH

I HAD been to Munich when the picture galleries, the theatres, and, I fear, the quality of Munich beer were its greatest attractions. On one occasion, however, I had a gruesome experience, for I was prevailed upon to make an inspection of the cemetery, where, in a separate building—in order to guard against the danger of burying any one who might only be in a trance—the dead are exposed in public in their open coffins. There were dead of all ages and of all conditions, for no station of life exempts from the obligation of public exposure. Hardly anybody was about, and I could not help reflecting that if such a law were to come into force in England it might be difficult to keep away the crowd whose morbid curiosity would draw them to look at the dead. The memory of the horrible sight haunted me for many a day.

In the summer of 1881 I had an opportunity of seeing something of the popular life of South Germany, and more particularly that of Munich. Germany is the home of social *Vereine*, or associations, and the rifle associations are among the few remaining German institutions of the Middle Ages which have survived the ruin of the Thirty Years War. Originally they were guilds formed for the defence of the citizens against the predatory inroads of the territorial nobles; they are now little more than a harmless means of convivial gatherings and open-air recreation of the small tradespeople. Nearly every town and many villages have their rifle guild and rifle range; some of them have been in existence for several centuries, and have documentary records to that effect. In Karlsbad the target is still shown on which Peter the Great

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scored a bull's eye. The rifle ranges are not the poor miniature affairs in a back-yard with which we are familiar, but long stretches of communal land, often beautifully situated on the fringe of a forest, with a cleanly kept restaurant, a concert and dancing saloon, the walls being covered with quaint old targets.

In July 1881 the Seventh Great Triennial International *Schützenfest* took place in Munich, to which crowds of visitors streamed from all parts of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland; for rifle-shooting is cultivated even more in these latter countries than in Germany, and these periodical meetings afford congenial opportunities for keeping alive sympathies which, in spite of political severance, exist between the masses of these predominantly Teutonic countries. This particular meeting was a record one, both as regards the number of visitors who attended it and the amount of beer consumed on the occasion. The streets of the city were gaily decorated, and the leading artists of Munich, ever to the fore in public spirit, did not think it beneath their dignity to lend their help generously in the way of suggestions for decoration and handsome donations. Foremost among them was the eminent portrait painter, Fritz A. Kaulbach, who contributed a most effective figure of a Munich beer maid in her pretty costume, and gave it as a present to the Munich rifle society—a valuable gift, since his pictures fetch very high prices. The festival began with a gorgeous pageant, a procession in which huge ornamental cars with groups of allegorical representations of trade guilds were followed by files of costumed men of past ages; altogether a picturesque sight, and one which could only be witnessed in the countries then represented.

Over 50,000 people were at the opening ceremony, 7000 *Schützen* among them. There was tense excitement when the quick-firing competition between the picked representatives of Austria, Switzerland and Germany took place. It lasted about three-quarters of an hour, and as soon as the results were made known the winners were conducted—some, indeed, carried aloft on the shoulders of their friends—to the temple

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which had been erected for the occasion, where Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, the heir-apparent to the throne, distributed the silver cups to the winners.

Ten years later I went again to Munich under very different auspices, as the guest of Franz von Lenbach. To be seen with him in public was to be oneself a personage of even greater importance than the winner of a prize at a *Schützenfest*. So great was the *prestige* attaching to this man that it spread to his immediate surroundings. Among the many eminent personages I met at his house or in direct connection with him was Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, a kindly, benevolent man, whose relations with Lenbach were of an extremely friendly and cordial nature. He came to Lenbach's *atelier* one day in 1892 with two of his daughters whilst I happened to be there, and entrusted me with a sympathetic message to convey to Prince Bismarck. Of other casual visitors I recall Count Philip Eulenburg; Richard Voss, the dramatist; George Hirth, the genial creator of the "Jugend," a very forceful man; and Paul Heyse, whose friendship I am still happy to possess.

Paul Heyse, whose poetical writings deservedly enjoy a world-wide reputation, was a great friend of Lenbach. He lived in the same road, in a villa standing in a garden, in surroundings of simplicity and distinction. I had heard the story of his high-minded action, many years previously, when he resigned an annual pension from King Maximilian of Bavaria because that monarch had thought fit to withdraw a similar mark of favour from Emanuel Gutzkow, the poet, in consequence of the latter's political leanings. This impressed me with admiration for the character of the man as much as for his gifts as a writer. Heyse is one of the remaining intellectual Germans of a previous generation, whose whole manner, appearance, and bearing betoken the well-bred gentleman. When Tennyson died Heyse sent me a translation into German of a short poem of the English Laureate's poem, "Crossing the Bar," which I gave to the London *Athenæum* for publication.

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On Paul Heyse's eightieth birthday he was presented with a costly album, each leaf of which was contributed by some man of letters selected from different countries. I was invited to participate, and wrote a few lines embodying the idea that, although many changes had come about in Germany, not all of which are deemed by her own people to be happy ones, as long as Germany continued to produce such lofty characters as Paul Heyse all would be well with her.

Björnstjerne-Björnson, the distinguished Norwegian writer, used to come to Munich to see his beautiful auburn-haired daughter, who was married to Langen, the publisher. During one of my visits to Munich, Lenbach happened to be painting the Norwegian author's portrait, and this gave me a welcome opportunity of making the latter's acquaintance. He was staying with his son-in-law at his villa, and received me with great kindness when I called upon him. I told him that many years ago his play, *Das Fallisement*, had made a deep impression on me, and that I had translated it into English, but could not get an English theatre to produce it; for that reason I had never approached him on the subject. In reply to his query whether I had read any of his novels, I told him that my other occupations had prevented me from reading any novels for many years. Thereupon he presented me with three volumes of his works, in each of which he wrote a few words and the date, January 20, 1897. One was the drama *Der Koenig*, another *Ueber Unsere Kraft*. On the flyleaf of his *Neue Erzaehlungen* he inscribed the words, "Ach, lesen Sie doch wieder einmal Erzaehlungen!—B. B.,"<sup>1</sup> a request to which I readily responded.

Hermann Levi, general director of the Court Opera, and well known as a composer of delightful songs and a friend of Wagner, whose works he had conducted at Bayreuth, was another valuable addition to the circle of my German friends. He was one of the few distinguished Germans I have met concerning whom I never heard a word of depreciation from any one, and from whose lips never came an unkind remark

<sup>1</sup> "Oh, do read some stories' again."

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about others. He was a refined and charming personality. I first met him at Friedrichsruh, whither he came in 1893, with Lenbach, to stay with Prince Bismarck on his birthday. He soon made himself *persona gratissima* with the Bismarck household, and, when he left, Bismarck's daughter, Countess Rantzau, gave him one of her father's black felt hats as a souvenir; for everything pertaining to the great statesman had already become a relic in his lifetime.

At Hermann Levi's house in Munich I was privileged to meet Frau Cosima Wagner, her son Siegfried, her daughters, and an array of musical courtiers in her train. As in the case of royalty, the invitations had to be submitted for the lady's approval, and it was at first deemed doubtful whether, as a friend of Lenbach, from whom she was said to be estranged, I should be allowed to meet her; and this in spite of Levi's intercession and the party being given in his house. It was a great occasion, and the date, January 22, 1899, one of almost historical import in musical annals, that of the first performance at the Royal Opera House at Munich of Siegfried Wagner's opera, *Der Bärenhäuter*, "the man with the bear skin"—apparently some old beer-quaffing, unwashed mythological Teuton!

Siegfried and his *Bärenhäuter* monopolise the conversation everywhere. Visitors have arrived from almost every capital in Europe; professional musical critics—particularly a very fat one, a great authority, from Vienna—theatrical *entrepreneurs*, and also a fair sprinkling of devout, aristocratic *fine fleur*, real live princes and princesses among them. The dress circle is filled with Frau Cosima Wagner's friends, or, let me say, devout, unquestioning followers of Wagner and his son Siegfried. For no others would for a moment be allowed near the Wagnerian shrine or to cross the Wagnerian threshold. Madame herself, dressed in black, her silvery hair setting off the pointed aristocratic features of the Comtesse d'Agoult's daughter, is seen in a front middle seat; her disciples are grouped around her. Nearly everybody is in evening dress, unusual attire in a German theatre, reserved for grand and stately occasions.

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*Der Bärenhäuter*, as it proceeds, develops into a veritable ovation for the young composer. Again and again he is called before the curtain, and bows his acknowledgments amid vociferous applause. Some of those who are not out-and-out Wagnerians find the plot, as also the music, a trifle wearying—not to say monotonous. Lost souls give vent to blasphemy. They say that this pre-arranged success will spoil whatever chance Siegfried might have had of producing solid, original work of his own; that if his father had been alive he would have sooner thrown the orchestra score at his son's head than have allowed the *Bärenhäuter* to be heard in public. But this profane talk, carried on in tremulous whispers, has little perceptible effect on the dominant wave of enthusiastic approval.

It is past ten o'clock. Down goes the curtain at last, and everybody is off in hot haste to the Arcis Strasse, which is soon thronged with a long row of carriages drawing up at No. 17. Herr General Director Levi is standing at the top of the staircase with his charming wife, both busy receiving the favoured guests. Hundreds were eager to come; only about eighty have been privileged to do so. Herr Kapellmeister Fischer arrives very tired; and no wonder, for he has conducted the *Bärenhäuter* from start to finish. Felix Mottl, from Carlsruhe, is already among the throng which is forming into a circle ready to receive Siegfried and his mother in its bosom as they alight from the carriage and slowly ascend the stairs, the latter truly a dowager-queen in appearance. It is an extraordinary scene. Frau Cosima is evidently to the manner born for receiving regal homage, in this case a very tempest of congratulations. The fairest women, even the lovely Countess K——, are unheeded here, where everybody crowds round to snatch a glance of recognition from the indomitable daughter of the great Liszt and her son Siegfried's mentor. He is less stately in appearance; in fact, nothing could be more simple and unassuming than his manner, the almost boyish, unaffected good-nature with which he shakes hands all round and thanks his friends for their good wishes. He looks very much like his father, although Frau Cosima

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afterwards gave it as her opinion that he most resembled her own father, Franz Liszt. To a phrenologist his features might well recall music in every outline. I fancy I can trace a likeness between Siegfried Wagner and almost every great musician from Mozart downwards. Otherwise his sallow complexion bears traces of the effects of burning the midnight oil. This is not surprising, seeing that the composition of an opera on Wagnerian lines is a task which only physical giants should approach.

Tables are laid for supper in several of the rooms, which are *en suite*, and soon the whole company is seated and busy discussing a sumptuous repast. Things are not done by halves here; music for the ear, "made in Germany," if you please; but *caviare* from Russia, *pâté de foie gras* from Strasburg, and genuine champagne from Epernay.

Hitherto Herr Levi had been vainly attempting to bring me within introducing distance of the Frau Meisterin, and finally hinted that I had better wait until after supper, which I did. Nor had I cause to regret it; for nothing could have been more gracious than the reception I met with when the Herr General Director piloted me into the room set apart, after the fashion of royalty, for the Dowager Queen in the realm of Wagnerian worship and those nearest to her throne. There she sat, with her paladins around her, those who wield the director's bâton conspicuous, the very field-m Marshals of her empire—Mottl, Fischer and others. Whilst Levi, *primus inter pares*, is rushing about doing the honours, Siegfried is seated opposite to his mother, and on either side of him a galaxy of handsome stately women; prominent among these his sister Eva, named after the heroine of the Meistersingers, Isolde, Daniele and Blandine von Bulow, the last three the daughters of Frau Cosima by her first husband, Hans von Bülow. I venture to say a few appreciative words concerning the great success of her son's opera. But Frau Cosima is not to be got at so easily; for she replies that success in itself is all very well, but far more important is it to produce good work than to bother ourselves as to whether our efforts are

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crowned with success or not. I stand corrected, and listen with pleasure to the lady's graceful acknowledgment of the increasing interest Bayreuth excites in England. Like Cecil Rhodes, Frau Cosima speaks in continents, and tells me that she is very satisfied with England and America, of course in reference to Wagner's music, every other point of view being non-existent. "In England we have some of our best friends," madame assures me. At this moment a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, bearing champagne glasses in their hands, invade the room. Suddenly these are raised on high to the *unisono* and repeated cry: "Siegfried, Siegfried, *hoch, hoch!*" Enthusiasm has reached its climax when Siegfried, after duly toasting everybody present, rises and says a few graceful words of thanks. Cigars and cigarettes are handed round, and everybody is soon absorbed in lively conversation until the small hours of the morning. For a sound constitution is one of the qualifications of a true Wagnerian of either sex.

As I go downstairs on my way out I pass Countess K——, the prettiest woman in Munich; her husband is putting a priceless sable cloak round her shoulders. Her face is a dream, but nobody seems to notice her. Peerless beauty, even with aristocratic birth and bearing thrown in, competes in vain where Frau Meisterin Cosima and her disciples award distinction and favour according to musical enthusiasm and unquestioning devotion.

Altogether it was an uplifting experience, the full significance of which, however, I only realised some time afterwards when meeting an influential friend in Berlin, Freiherr von Dincklage, a Prussian General of musical tastes, who had been instrumental in obtaining the erection of the monument to Richard Wagner in the Berlin *Thiergarten*. He and his friends found the money, and put up the statue; unfortunately, however, they had neglected to assure themselves in advance of Madame Wagner's consent and co-operation, and she declined to sanction the project or to have anything to do with it. This attitude was, of course, taken as a cue by her followers, and the project fell flat.



## MUNICH

Lenbach spent many of his evenings at the Artists' Club, the "Allotria," which, as long as he lived, was a centre of social and intellectual intercourse. He used to wind up the evening with a game at cards with a few intimate friends. In many ways the "Allotria" was expressive of the strong democratic character of South Germany, which only recognises the aristocracy of talent. The club consisted of several large rooms at the back of a beerhouse in the *Barer Strasse*. The annual subscription was only thirty-two marks, and the membership was supposed to be restricted to people connected with art and science—either writers, authors, the eminent black and white artists of the *Fliegende Blätter*, painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, and a few professors of the Munich University. An exception as regards membership was made in favour of some prominent brewer millionaires—the Allsopps, Basses and Guinnesses of Bavaria. They were admitted, but it was understood that they were not to have a voice or vote in the administration of the club, which was entirely confined to the artistic element; this in spite of their wealth and capacity for playing the part of Mæcenas. The only privilege accorded to these beer magnates, I am told, was that of being allowed to "endow" the club now and then on festive occasions with a cask or two of their choicest brews.

On the walls are some drawings, fanciful arrangements of artistic emblems, and humorous caricatures of the more famous members by the renowned painters, Lenbach, Fritz Kaulbach, Franz Stuck and others, who all mixed at the "Allotria" on terms of perfect cordiality with the most unknown members as long as they could claim to belong to the same fields of intellectual endeavour. The members sit together at long wooden tables, where the far-famed Munich beer, at twopence a pint, washes down the Spartan fare. Everybody joins in the conversation, newcomers being introduced all round before taking their seats.

Sometimes visitors—travellers who had anything interesting to tell—would give a lecture; occasionally leading artists would drop in late. A grand piano stood on a platform, and some

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wonderful examples of extempore improvisation were heard ; more attractive than conventional concert performances. Altogether, I fancy more talent could be met with in one evening in the unpretentious "Allotria" than in any similar resort in other parts of the world. Now and then, indeed, all who were distinguished in art, letters and music, as well as strangers of note, might be seen there. Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, was a visitor. The Bavarian Princes, too, occasionally came as guests. In 1892 Bismarck came there with Lenbach, in memory of which visit the tankard he drank out of is still kept as one of the relics of the club.

At the "Allotria" I met Herrn von Perfall, Franz Stuck, the painter ; Gabriel von Seidl, the architect, a great friend of Lenbach ; Eugen Wolf, the traveller ; Major Wissman, the genial African explorer, who shortly afterwards came to a premature end ; as well as a number of other notabilities in the arts, drama, music and science.

One evening a week Lenbach would spend at a "Kegel" club to play skittles, where celebrities like Paul Heyse, Gabriel Seidl and others would meet and associate with the small shopkeeper element under the same unpretentious and frugal conditions as those of the "Allotria." Altogether these experiences and memories are ineffaceable, and, now that Lenbach is no more, can have no repetition.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FIELD-MARSHAL BLUMENTHAL

DURING a stay in Berlin in the winter of 1899–1900 my friend the late Heinrich von Poschinger gave me an introduction to Field-Marshal Count Blumenthal, with whom I had several conversations.

The three wars which preceded and directly conduced to the unification of Germany brought forth three Prussian strategists of the first rank, concerning whom military opinion is now practically unanimous in declaring that each of them might have proved equal to the great task which ultimately fell to the lot of the best known of the three. What were the limits of their capacities, what unexplored possibilities of leadership might still have been theirs, can never be known, since none of them ever encountered defeat. These supreme commanders of armed hosts—sometimes popularly supposed to be men of study, but in truth men of action of the very sternest type—were Generals von Moltke, von Goeben, and von Blumenthal.

General von Goeben, the youngest of the three, was the first to quit the world's busy stage (1880); Count Moltke died (1891) in his ninety-first year; and Count Blumenthal followed him to rest, at the same age, on December 22, 1900.

Although the name of Blumenthal, like many others of a floral signification, has a somewhat plebeian sound in German, the family of the late Field-Marshal is in reality one of the oldest in North Germany. When, late in life, Count Blumenthal was on a visit in Rome, Professor Theodor Mommsen one day bluntly accosted him as follows :

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"Well, Excellenz, what are you doing here?"

"Why, to be sure," Blumenthal replied, "I am looking up a few missing links of my ancestry."

"But what, if I may ask, has your ancestry to do with Rome?"

"Don't you know, Herr Professor, that the Blumenthals are descended from the Roman Emperor Florian?"

However this may be, Blumenthals are mentioned in sundry Swiss chronicles early in the tenth century, and the Brandenburg estate, now in the possession of the late Count Blumenthal's daughter, has been in the family ever since the year 1187. At five different periods in German history members of the family have been raised to the dignity of Count.

Leonhard von Blumenthal was born in Schwedt, on the Oder, on July 30, 1810. He was educated at the military cadet school, and entered the Prussian army on July 28, 1827, as lieutenant in the Guards Infantry Reserve Regiment (the present Fusilier Guards).

When Blumenthal received his commission the memory of the battle of Waterloo was just twelve years old. Scarcely twenty years had elapsed since Napoleon—after crushing the military power of Prussia in a day—rode through the Brandenburg Gate, lifting his cocked hat above his marble features in response to the acclamations of the fickle Berlin crowd. Just as many middle-aged men are to be met with in our time who took part in the victorious wars of 1866 and 1870, so in those days a great number had shared in the disasters, and could remember the humiliation, of their country. The tone of the best among them was leavened with such memories.

Something had indeed been rotten in the State; but the real inwardness of things was only known then, as always, to a few. A process akin to what Friedrich Nietzsche calls *Eine Umwerthung aller Werthe* (a reassessment of values) had been going on in the world, such a "revaluation" as is again imperceptibly taking place at the present time, probably on a far more extensive scale than ever before. But whatever its

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*Goos Blumenthal*  
*General A. Blumenthal*  
*1900.*

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character—practical, scientific, or spiritual—its full significance was only gradually brought home to the crowd by that hardest of all taskmasters, bitter experience.

The Prussian officer in 1806—and by the general term I mean principally that choice minority above referred to—was wrongly trained. He was out of touch with the modern trend of affairs; not, as is usually supposed, ignorant of his profession, or neglected in mental or modern training. On the contrary, the powerful influence of such men as Prince Henry of Prussia, Behrenhorst, Buelow, Scharnhorst, and others, who formed the nucleus of the famous military society of Berlin, had prepared and kept the intellectual forces of the army far and wide on the alert. The military profession, besides possessing a somewhat pedantic knowledge of strategy and tactics, was as familiar with the philosophic writings of Kant as with those of Rousseau and Voltaire; and no Prussian officer, a hundred years ago, would have been able to move freely in society had he been totally unacquainted with the ideas they contain.

In the zenith of the intellectual life of Germany, when a serious interest in philosophy and letters prevailed as never before and perhaps not since, it was impossible for the Prussian army to remain in a state of ignorance or indifference. The military profession, however much it may have formed a castle of aristocratic birth within itself, was, as regards the cultivation of the mind, of the same flesh and blood as the best of the nation, and subsequent events have proved that this was so. The *élite*, among whom were Clausewitz, Grolman, Müffling, Gneisenau, Boyen, the two Schölers, and others, who, after Jena, were mainly instrumental in re-organising the national forces of the country, were themselves the natural outcome of this unobtrusive, but serious, intellectual life, towards which each, unknown to the ignorant crowd, silently contributed his share. They formed a body of hard-working, earnest thinkers, who proved themselves capable of uniting a remarkable capacity for deeds of action with the highest intellectual attainments. This is the

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paramount claim to glory of the best blood and brain of the Prussian army, and as such, in the opinion of some qualified judges, far excels its achievements in recent wars. Many have suffered defeat, and have afterwards secured afresh the laurel of victory, but it is questionable whether history can show so widely spread an example of high culture and conduct combined as prevailed in the Prussian army when Lieutenant von Blumenthal joined the colours.

Promotion was very slow at that time, and the life of a young subaltern, although he was not so much burdened with routine work as now, was one continuous spell of Spartan discipline and self-denial, without much visible prospect of recognition or future advancement. The monthly pay of a Prussian lieutenant was 19 thalers 22½ silbergroschen, supplemented by various allowances amounting to 2 thalers 5 silbergroschen, a total of 21 thalers 27½ silbergroschen: in English coin—without, however, taking note of the difference in the purchasing power of money seventy years ago and to-day—exactly £3 5s. 9d. Of the above amount, fifteen shillings were devoted to the clothing fund, one shilling went for club subscription, one shilling for the regimental fund, one shilling for library subscription, one shilling towards the regimental band, and, on an average, eighteen shillings towards the cost of the mess dinner.

So great was the impoverishment of the country generally, and of the smaller nobility in particular, that private sources of income, when they existed, were of very little account. Few indeed of the artillery or engineer officers possessed any private means, and, even among those more fortunately situated, any so-called “home allowance” (except in the case of the Guards and cavalry regiments) ceased as soon as the rank of captain was attained. A captain, with an income of £10 a month, was looked upon by dowagers as a fair match.

As lately as 1860 the average extra home allowance of a Prussian subaltern was as follows:

In the infantry of the line, between 15s. and £1 10s. a month; in the infantry of the Guards, £2 5s. a month; in



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the cavalry regiment, £3 15s. to £4 10s. a month ; and in the cavalry of the Guards, at most, £7 10s. a month.

Even in the Guards the mode of living was very simple. An officer who could indulge in a hot supper was looked upon as a wealthy man. Many Prussian officers had to be satisfied with a cup of tea or a glass of beer, which they took in their poorly furnished, uncarpeted, low-ceilinged, but scrupulously clean, quarters, with the brown ration bread, often without the addition of butter. Wine was only to be thought of on special occasions, except in the Rhenish garrisons, where its cheapness was such that sixpennyworth was sufficient to lead half-way towards intoxication. It was nothing unusual to find officers, whose families figured among the elect of the *Almanach de Gotha*, after dining for something like sixpence at the officers' mess, denying themselves a cup of coffee, the price of which would hardly exceed one penny.

Outside the regular routine of duty there were few opportunities for relaxation or pleasure. Betting, gambling, horse-racing, and other forms of exciting sport, such as are now intruding more and more into the Prussian army in large garrison towns, where the wealthy officer already comes in for a certain amount of notoriety and popularity, were unknown. As yet the present custom of officers congregating in the evening at public restaurants did not exist. The hospitality afforded by family life of a simple and refined kind possessed greater attractions to the subaltern in those times than in our quick-living age. An occasional visit to a theatre—preferably on a Sunday evening—where officers were admitted at half-price, was about the only expensive luxury permitted.

On the other hand, the routine duties of an officer were not of a very exacting nature—at all events, not to the Prussian temperament—although they involved being up and about at five in the morning for the personal supervision of recruit drill. Three to five hours' work in the morning and an hour and a half in the afternoon comprised the day's routine, which, in many cases, notably with such men as Blumenthal,

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was supplemented by hard study, voluntarily undertaken in spare time. It was usual for two, or even three, subalterns to live and work together, in order to share the expense of fire, light, and attendance.

Such were the conditions under which Blumenthal, like his contemporaries since known to fame—von Roon, von Moltke, von Steinmetz, and many others who had no private means—managed to live and work hard for long years without getting into debt. That they were able to do so—even without as much as a feeling of hardship being involved in the process—was mainly due to the *esprit de corps* which prevailed in the army at the time. Men whose womenkind only a few years previously had willingly sacrificed every piece of their jewellery to the needs of their country, many of them wearing wedding-rings of iron for those of gold, which they had placed in the national offertory, were not likely to feel the lack of wealth and luxury as a hardship. And what besides combined to produce a feeling almost amounting to disdain for money was the conviction, which had been inculcated by Clausewitz and Scharnhorst and had gradually grown into a dogma, that only by Spartan simplicity of life could those military virtues be fostered upon which depended the efficiency of the army and the fate of the country itself.

The marriage of an officer, under such circumstances, except to a lady with some means of her own, was obviously an impossibility. In the year 1839 Lieutenant von Blumenthal, after twelve years' service, wedded an English girl named Delicia Vyner, from Easthorpe, in Warwickshire, to whom he remained devotedly attached through life. He was, like Moltke, very proud of his English wife, as well as of his knowledge of the English language.

"In my younger days," he assured me, "I spoke English so fluently that, although you might have been uncertain of the county I hailed from, you would scarcely have doubted that I was English."

Unfortunately, however, domestic happiness can hardly have tended to improve Blumenthal's pecuniary and professional

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prospects; for he himself told me that, in the year 1848, after having served twenty-one years as a subaltern, he seriously contemplated leaving the army in order to emigrate to England—a country for which, in common with so many of his class and caste at that period, he had a strong partiality—with the intention of earning a livelihood as a teacher of the German language. The outbreak of the revolution in Berlin in 1848 caused him to change his mind, by drawing the attention of the military authorities towards him and so laying the foundation of his future brilliant career.

As among the blind the one-eyed is king, so in the midst of the general helplessness—almost amounting to downright pusillanimity—which, in consequence of the hesitating attitude of the King of Prussia, then prevailed in executive circles in Berlin, a single trait of timely decision on the part of Lieutenant von Blumenthal, backed, of course, by his excellent record of service, proved to be sufficient to decide his future. The insurgents, in an outlying district of the town, known as the *Rehberg*, intended to make an advance upon the *Thiergarten*.<sup>1</sup> Blumenthal was ordered to keep the *Rehbergers* off, but he was not to open fire on the mob. Still he unhesitatingly ordered his men to load with ball cartridge, and to shoot “at sight” should the *Rehbergers* show themselves. I believe that it turned out to be unnecessary to resort to extreme measures, but Blumenthal’s quick decision, as well as the excellent disposition of his troops to meet the emergency, had been noted by his superior officers. He was shortly afterwards promoted captain, and at once attached to the general staff, that complicated brain-centre of the Prussian army and stepping-stone to further advancement.

In the same year—still as a junior captain on the general staff—he was attached to the staff of General von Bonin in the Schleswig-Holstein campaign, and distinguished himself at Kolding and Fridericia. On his return to Berlin he spent several years with the general staff, during which he was entrusted with various military missions to England. In

<sup>1</sup> The Hyde Park of Berlin.

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1858 he was appointed aide-de-camp to Prince Frederick Charles, who was destined to play a leading part in the reorganisation of the Prussian army. After this had been successfully carried out (in 1860), Blumenthal was promoted Colonel and Commander of the 11th Thuringian Regiment. In February 1863 he was again brought into close contact with Prince Frederick Charles, on being appointed chief of the staff of the 3rd Corps, but in December of the same year he was transferred to be chief of the general staff of the composite army corps in Schleswig-Holstein, during the war with Denmark.

In this position Blumenthal attracted attention by his well-matured and successful operations, as well as by the boldness of his conceptions, the most important of which was his avoidance of a direct attack on the trenches of Düppel by crossing the Sound to Alsen in pontoon boats. This project, however, although approved by the King, and definitely fixed for the 2nd of April, was rendered impossible by the stormy weather, which upset all calculations. The published military correspondence of Count Moltke shows clearly that Blumenthal's great colleague fully and generously approved of his daring scheme, which he considered "would alone have brought about a satisfactory end of the campaign, as it would have led to the annihilation of the enemy's forces." He wrote to Blumenthal: "Do not let yourself be discouraged by the frustration of your daring plan. It might have turned out more favourably, but not less so. Like Philip the Second, with his armada, you could not send out your pontoons against the elements." Notwithstanding the non-execution of Blumenthal's idea, its conception was still placed to his credit at headquarters, and marked him out for future work of the most responsible kind.

At the outbreak of the war in 1866 Blumenthal was appointed chief of the general staff of the Silesian, or second army, under the command of the Crown Prince, in which position his eminent services—particularly at the battles of Nachod and Königgrätz—are matters of history.

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The intimate relationship, which existed until death, between the Crown Prince and Blumenthal had already taken root during the Danish War; but in the campaign of 1866 it was indissolubly strengthened. The Crown Prince was incapable of jealousy. He did not consider himself a professional soldier, and Blumenthal was indispensable to him. He it was who thought out and drafted every general order and instruction, whilst the Crown Prince took a keen pleasure in watching the successful activity of his chief of the staff.

Blumenthal originated the much-discussed but brilliant line of advance which led to the victorious march of the second army into Bohemia, although the credit of this successful operation must be shared by the Crown Prince, who took upon himself the responsibility of supporting it. This Blumenthal himself was the first to recognise, for according to his own words: "We were merely *soldatesca*, and only risked our skins; he staked the existence of his country and his future crown on the result." The plan was submitted to Moltke, who thoroughly approved of it, merely adding, "Make sure of correct and efficient leadership."

The campaign of Bohemia brought Blumenthal's name more than ever to the front; and yet, had it not been for the grateful devotion of the Crown Prince, that war might well have marked the end of his military career, as, indeed, it practically did that of several other high officers. For, unlike Moltke, Blumenthal possessed some of the defects of a vivid, spontaneous temperament. A few days after Sadowa he had written a long letter, in English, to his wife, and forwarded it by the Prussian field-post. This was intercepted by the Austrians, and a German translation published in the Vienna papers. In this letter Blumenthal—in the uncompromising spirit of one artist towards the work of another—severely criticised the plans of General Moltke,<sup>1</sup> commented adversely

<sup>1</sup> The history of Prussia supplies another curious instance of a ruthless critical instinct prevailing between two great military leaders. To Prince Henry, the renowned brother of Frederick the Great, the latter's military genius was nothing more than an undue eagerness to give battle.

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on the personality of Prince Frederick Charles, and wound up with a complaint against the Crown Prince himself: "What a pity that he is never punctual, that he keeps us waiting for hours!"

This was indeed a heinous offence in the Prussian service, and would unquestionably have led to Blumenthal's disgrace, in spite of all his previous services, had he not, in addition to the tried friendship of the Crown Prince, possessed that traditional good luck which, according to Moltke, is, in the long run, only given to the "fit." Prince Frederick Charles, the sternest of disciplinarians, was no sooner informed of Blumenthal's unfortunate letter—one morning he found a newspaper containing it lying on his desk—than he took horse in a very ugly temper, and rode straight to the King's headquarters, with the evident intention of securing Blumenthal's punishment. Fortunately for the latter the Crown Prince had already forestalled his accuser. He was closeted with his father and had succeeded in securing the pardon of his friend. On leaving the King, he met Prince Frederick Charles in the ante-chamber, and, walking up to his cousin, said good-temperedly:

"I can tell you a piece of news, which will afford you as much pleasure as it gives me to be able to tell it to you. The King has forgiven General Blumenthal his thoughtless letter."

This forgiveness, however, was made dependent upon one condition: Blumenthal must apologise in person to General von Moltke. It is said that Moltke—like Cæsar, who, both after Pharsalia and Thapsus, caused the incriminating letters of the Roman senators, found in the enemy's camp, to be burnt unread—declined to read Blumenthal's letter when it was brought to his notice. Certain it is that when Blumenthal, as in duty bound, called upon him, Moltke cut his apology short with the graceful words: "My dear Blumenthal, what a man writes to his wife is no concern of third persons. Let our intercourse remain as friendly as of yore." Blumenthal, however, must have felt rather sore, for, on leaving Moltke and meeting the late Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe in the street, he related what had taken place, adding, "This is the only

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time that crusty old chap has really won my admiration." But years afterwards he openly expressed his sense of Molke's chivalrous conduct, without any qualifying clause.

Blumenthal's share in the war of 1870-71, in which he again filled the responsible position of chief of the staff of the Crown Prince, is also a matter of history. His were the first victories at Weissenburg and Woerth, which proved to be of the very greatest military—as well as political—importance. The victory at Sedan also depended in no small degree upon the perfect co-operation of the third army, which was essentially the work of Blumenthal.

After the war Blumenthal was appointed to the command of the fourth army corps, and in 1883 was raised to the dignity of Count. In the year 1888, on coming to the throne, the Emperor Frederick appointed him Field-Marshal, and, as if in anticipation of his approaching end, sent Blumenthal his own marshal's *bâton*, so that he might, whilst still living, feel that he had honoured to the full the man who had stood by his side on many a hard-fought field. The Emperor Frederick knew—and he probably alone—of a signal proof of unselfish devotion which Blumenthal had given years before to his chief. It was towards the end of the seventies, and a war with Russia was among the possible contingencies. One day the Emperor William was talking matters over with his son, and told him that in the event of war he could not again let him have Blumenthal as his adviser, as the latter had a paramount claim to an independent command. The Emperor asked the Crown Prince to find out what Blumenthal himself thought on the subject. Blumenthal, on being questioned by the Crown Prince, replied that he would be quite content to serve again under His Imperial Highness. With him he had always been able to lead the army to victory, but whether he would be able to do so as an independent commander was a matter for less confidence.

Blumenthal remained on the active list until April 1, 1898, when, after having held the general inspectorship of the German army, one of the highest positions in the

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military hierarchy, he received permission to retire. He had belonged to the army for nearly sixty years—except in the cases of Moltke, Wrangel, and the Emperor William, the longest space of time a Prussian officer had ever continued in the army on active service. He retired into private life, loaded with honours by his sovereign and universally exalted by his countrymen.

About a year before his death he was living in a flat on the ground floor in one of the large mansions of the *Alsen Strasse*, Berlin, almost within sight of that huge square building known as the Great General Staff. Nothing could have been more unpretentious than the surroundings of this illustrious old soldier, or more engaging than his natural, unconstrained simplicity of manner.

"It is now close upon eighty years that I have worn the King's coat,"<sup>1</sup> he said, laying his hand upon his chest, on which, suspended from the neck, shone the blue enamel cross of the "*Ordre pour le Mérite*," as if to emphasise the idea that this very same undress uniform was practically the identical one he had worn all his life.

Count Blumenthal complained to me that he found more difficulty than of old in mastering quickly the contents of a book. "But I take it to be one of the compensations of old age that I think more slowly than formerly." However, I soon discovered that he was still able to think clearly, as also to give terse and incisive expression to his thought.

He spoke with a touch of tenderness of the Emperor Frederick, and bitterly deplored his untimely end. "Had he lived," continued the faithful champion of the dead monarch, "he would have contented all but those whom it is impossible to satisfy, for he never thought of himself. His pride and his ambition were of a kind that would not have wronged or given pain to anybody. No man was ever more misjudged. He was accused of vacillation. As a matter of fact, a certain form of hesitancy which characterised him was mainly the

<sup>1</sup> Blumenthal entered the cadet school, in which military uniforms are worn, in his tenth year. He was in his ninetieth year on the above occasion.



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result of over-anxiety to do the right thing for others, never for himself. Once, however, his mind was made up on an important matter, he was as firm of purpose as his father—nothing could sway him.”

The old brain-fighter was not particularly edified by the general trend of things in Germany and of military affairs in particular. “We are being far too much governed all round,” he said. “It has become the fashion to decry everything that is old—us old men included. General von Versen came to see me one day some years ago (1890). He was evidently a mouthpiece of the views prevailing in high quarters, and spoke disparagingly of the old generals in our army. In the course of our conversation he said, ‘Just look at the First Napoleon. His generals were all young men.’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘they were young men. And almost all of them<sup>1</sup> were no good (*haben nichts getaugt*). We old fellows did our work much better than they, for I make bold to say there was not one of us whom you could have picked out as the cause of a disaster.’ And General von Versen was unable to gainsay this.”

The old soldier, once launched on the topic nearest his heart, gave frank expression to his views.

“You cannot produce soldiers by cramming alone: you can only nurture up to a certain point, by means of systematic instruction, what is innate in a man in the way of military instinct, character and capacity for independent judgment. There is too much book-learning and book-writing nowadays. Our military men are far too ready with their pens. Literary success does not necessarily imply the capacity to lead an army.

“Moltke’s greatest achievement was that he made it humanly possible to lead large armies, such as Napoleon first raised without possessing the machinery for controlling them: hence his disasters. This machinery Moltke created. He devised an organisation which worked so perfectly and independently that such things as orders from the supreme command were very rare in our wars—only general directions

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were needed. Thus, in our invasion of France in 1870, Moltke sent us word that the King wanted the left wing of our army to advance on the south side of Strasburg. I replied that this would be a mistake, and that I could only carry out such an order if imperatively commanded to do so. Moltke sent General von Verdy to talk the matter over and my view prevailed.

"To-day the danger of a false move, and consequent disaster, is very much increased. The telegraph is in so much more general use than even in 1870 that one person might well be tempted to want to control everything himself. This would tend to eliminate that play of independent judgment in a chief of the staff which has worked so successfully with us in the past. But it is not given to *anybody* to overlook and direct *everything*."

With regard to more recent events the Field-Marshal said that he had followed the course of the war in South Africa as well as he was able to do from the papers, and, with all admiration for the British soldier, he did not think the methods and tactics of the leaders were very different from what they had been in the time of Marlborough. He believed that the introduction of the modern rifle had sounded the knell of the superiority of the British infantry, an opinion already expressed many years ago by General Sir Charles Napier.<sup>1</sup> "The English character," in Count Blumenthal's opinion, "is more suited to the old condition of things than to that prevailing at present. The French originally introduced modern *tirailleur* tactics, which, in consequence of the continual improvement in firearms, have now reached a very high development. It is, besides, a mode of fighting eminently suited to the national character of the French."<sup>2</sup> With military matters, it is as with everything else ;

<sup>1</sup> See *Defects of Indian Government*, by General Sir Charles Napier, G.C.B.

<sup>2</sup> I subsequently mentioned this remark to Count Alexander Vitzthum von Eckstädt, who was Commander of the twelfth army corps (Saxon) at the time, and reputed to be one of the best strategists of the German army. I also communicated to him a further observation of Count Blumenthal's; namely, that the revolution of tactics which has been brought about by

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you cannot adopt blindly the methods of other countries merely because you see they are successful elsewhere. Very often they are more or less the outcome of national character, of geographical or of social conditions, as, for instance, the Swiss rifle corps system, which cannot be transplanted.

"We adopted the *tirailleur* system of fighting from the French, but we have still much to learn in its practice. The Boers excel in it. The English are splendid fellows, but their one idea seems to be to shoot and be shot. Their officers are not sufficiently trained. We Prussians go to the other extreme. The plodding bookworm gets ahead too often now. In my time our people received a sound scientific training, but the individual—the personality—was, after all, the finally deciding element; hence our results."

Blumenthal was, at first sight, not striking in appearance. He was slight, not above medium height, and even when in the prime of life is said to have carried his head bent slightly forward. He was also rather negligent and unmilitary in his outward bearing, at least, according to strict Prussian notions.

One day at Versailles, in 1870, the Emperor William met him on the staircase wearing one of his recently received grand crosses fastened all awry over the wrong shoulder, quite a serious breach of etiquette. The Emperor pointed it out to him, adding good-humouredly: "Never mind, Blumenthal; I

the latest developments of quick-firing infantry rifles is calculated to give the French an advantage over the Germans, inasmuch as it calls for greater initiative on the part of the individual soldier, a gift which is possessed in an eminent degree by the French. He replied that there was undoubtedly a great deal of truth in this opinion of the Field Marshal; on the other hand, the looseness of formation which was a necessary corollary of modern tactics tended to the weakening of the military units (*Verbaende*) and a consequent loss of touch of the officers with their men. This would increase the chances of panic to which the French, in spite of their great fighting qualities, were very liable. To my rejoinder that the Boers had fought successfully under these modern conditions, he replied that this case could not be taken as a normal one. Peasants who fight for their hearth and home, particularly peasants of such a sturdy race as the Dutch, possess far tougher fighting qualities than most armies.

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can well understand that you have no time to look after yourself, for you have always looked after us so well."

Blumenthal's countenance revealed very much the same indications of intellectuality which were so noticeable in that of his eminent comrade-in-arms, Count Moltke. His eyes were of a penetrating, expressive blue, clear and undimmed even in his ninetieth year. His strong features, particularly the prominent nose, indicated the force of character which he possessed in so eminent a degree. There were in that serious yet kindly looking face the clear traces of those qualities which go to make up great military leaders. "*C'était, après tout, de la pâte dont on fait les grands généraux.*" One who served under him, and who himself attained high distinction in his profession, the late General von Verdy du Vernois, thus describes Blumenthal:

"He possessed in an eminent degree the highest qualifications of a military leader: quick discernment of the requirements of the situation, rapidity and boldness in deciding what to do, and utmost care in the consideration of every detail. Unbiased in forming his opinion, he was never swayed by outside influences of any kind. He always accepted the fullest responsibility for himself, and threw the whole weight of his personality into whatever lay before him. Even in the most critical moments on the field of battle he retained his calm appreciation of the situation. Although his temperament disposed him to daring action, he never omitted to weigh most carefully every possible contingency beforehand. No *contretemps* could shake his determination. It was a pleasure to serve under his orders."

## CHAPTER XIV

### KING CHARLES OF ROUMANIA

ON my way back from Constantinople after the Greco-Turkish War, in the summer of 1897, I stopped at Bucharest and spent an evening at the house of Demeter Stourdza, the Prime Minister of Roumania. Two of the Stourdza family had been my schoolfellows at Dresden, and I had made the Minister's acquaintance earlier in the year in Vienna. The salon of Madame Stourdza, *née* Princess Cantacuzene,<sup>1</sup> was at that time the centre of the social and intellectual life of the Roumanian capital. There was open house every evening after nine o'clock, when diplomatists, soldiers, and politicians dropped in promiscuously to discuss the news of the day and sun themselves in the favour of the fascinating mistress of the house; *grande dame de par le monde*, and a keen politician as well. The Prime Minister himself was rarely to be met there, except for a few fugitive moments, immersed as he was in State business or buried in his capacious library among his books. In fact, he occasionally slept with them at night on a cane sofa covered with rugs, being a voracious reader and a voluminous writer. It was to this library that I adjourned with him. In the course of conversation the Prime Minister presented me with the first volume of the German edition of the King of Roumania's "Reminiscences," which were appearing at the time. I took the book with me to England and read it through. Later I obtained the other volumes, and asked to be allowed to bring out an abridged edition of the whole work in English. This request was granted, and the book

<sup>1</sup> All titles of nobility have now been abolished in Roumania, as also in Norway.

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was published in 1899 by Messrs. Harper and Brothers, London and New York, and subsequently added to my other books in the Tauchnitz Collection of British Authors. It contained several hitherto unpublished documents of great political interest, notably some letters of the Emperor Frederick, which only appeared subsequently in the last volume of the German original. This brought me into touch with the King of Roumania, and led to an invitation to pay him a visit at Ragatz, Switzerland, where he "made a cure" and was visited by his relations every autumn. Since the death of his mother and of his two brothers, to both of whom he was devotedly attached, the King has ceased coming to the pretty Swiss watering-place. Accordingly I went to Ragatz in September 1899 and stayed three days at the Hôtel Quellenhof, in the grounds of which the Roumanian Royal family inhabited a charming rustic villa.

Soon after my arrival I called at the *châlet*, and was taken up into a little room on the first floor, where I found the King seated at a writing-table. He received me with cordiality in his quiet, undemonstrative way, and was evidently well disposed towards one who had been absorbed for several months in the history of his life. His Majesty asked me a number of questions on topics of a political as well as of a personal nature, and appeared to take a great interest in English affairs; in fact, he gave me to understand that he would always be glad to receive news from me concerning them. He was loud in his praise of the civilising work England had done and was doing in Egypt, and in his admiration of Lord Kitchener's march to Khartoum, which he characterised as a splendid feat of organisation.

After some time the Queen, a stately apparition, known everywhere as "Carmen Sylva," came into the room and joined in the conversation, and we adjourned to another apartment on the ground floor for tea, with the Queen as hostess. Before leaving, the King invited me to come back to dinner, but asked me not to trouble to put on evening dress. And here I may mention that during my stay, in which I shared



*Carol*

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every meal but one with the Royal family, nobody donned evening dress, and the only uniform I saw was that worn by the Royal domestics. The company consisted of ladies and gentlemen who for the time being had thrown off the trappings of their worldly station and had retired into private life to enjoy its amenities unfettered. The atmosphere of unconstrained simplicity which greeted me from the first moment of my arrival has remained in my memory as the dominant characteristic of that Royal party. *Vin du pays* was the beverage at table. One royal lady even drank a glass of Munich beer. Only when the King's mother arrived was a bottle of superior claret to be seen, and then exclusively for her.

The morning after my arrival brought some fresh visitors, as I noticed on being shown into the drawing-room.

I had hardly made my obeisance to the King and Queen, and rejoined the circle to await the signal for lunch, when a rather slight, fair, and refined-looking man addressed me in such excellent English that he might have been a Briton. I could see from a few of his casual remarks that he would be quite at home in England; but I could not tell who he was, and in consequence felt somewhat embarrassed how to reply when he came up and addressed me. At lunch a lady on my left joined in our conversation and seemed to be on intimate terms with him. In reply to a remark displaying a kindly interest in one of my books, I asked if I might send the work in question to him. He was delighted, and volunteered to write the address to which I was to send it. I handed him my note-book, in which he pencilled some *château* near Meran, but no name. I suggested that if he would add his name I should have the pleasure of possessing his autograph. He did so readily, and I found he was one of the Orleans princes—H.R.H. the Duc de Vendôme. His mother was the ill-fated Duchesse d'Alençon. The lady sitting at my side was his wife, a sister of the present King of the Belgians. In conversation we touched upon the historical significance of some of the titular names of the Bourbon family, also the euphony and

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distinction of many of the names of the French aristocracy, such as "Mortemart," "Montmorency," "Châtelherault." Finally, I put it to the Duke that, although we lived in a democratic age, people who, like himself, come into the world with such family traditions and privileges to back them up have still a "great pull" in the battle of life. "It is true," he said, "we are favoured in the matter of birth, but this is far from constituting happiness. Where everything comes to us without any action of our own our sense of responsibility should be great. It is only natural that we feel an ardent desire to accomplish something 'off our own bat' in whatever line it may be—science, letters, or art. In this, however, I am afraid we rarely succeed."

Before we rose from table the Duke proposed that we should meet later in the afternoon for a game of billiards. I had not waited long in the garden ere he appeared with an envelope in his hand. "As you were good enough to ask for my signature," he said, "I thought I would bring you my photograph and that of my wife and child. When you come to Paris I hope you will pay us a call at Neuilly." We had a long talk but no billiards that afternoon. The signed photographs I still possess as mementos of the kindly nature of a royal couple whose demeanour betokened their recognition of the oft-quoted but rarely realised proverb, *Noblesse oblige*.

During my stay at Ragatz, the King's mother, accompanied by her son, the late Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, a most sympathetic personality, whose candidature for the throne of Spain was one of the causes of the war of 1870, arrived on a visit to the King and Queen. The Princess, then in her eighty-seventh year, was in possession of all her faculties, except that she was deaf. Despite her deafness, however, she was full of interest in everything concerning the King, whom she evidently worshipped with a fond mother's love. After dinner she expressed a wish to speak to me, and said, in a kind and sympathetic voice, whilst she held in her hand the English edition of the King's Life, which had been recently published: "You have written so beautifully about my son." Owing to

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her deafness I was doubtful what to do or say in reply, and I turned appealingly to the King, who stood beside his mother. He told me to write down whatever came into my head, as it would be sure to please her. In this novel way a prolonged conversation took place between us, I jotting down my crude thoughts in a note-book lying on the table and showing it first to the King to ask if what I had written "would do." When the King nodded assent, I passed it on to the Princess, who continued the conversation in this fashion for some time. Rarely, if ever, have I met a lady whose manner revealed such a kindly, affectionate disposition as I detected in this Princess's voice and looks when speaking of the King, her son, who, in an age of unrest, change, and democratic upheaval, has founded a dynasty and succeeded almost single-handed in building up a nation. King Charles is also the only living Sovereign who has commanded a victorious army in a pitched battle.

In taking my leave the King graciously expressed a wish that I would pay him a visit in his capital and have a look at his country seat of Sinaja; but nearly nine years elapsed before I was able to do so. Being again in Constantinople in April 1908, I wrote to His Majesty that if he still retained the same kind sentiments towards me as of yore I proposed to return *viâ* Bucharest and pay my respects to him. An answer came by return that the King would be pleased to see me, and be glad if I would advise him in advance of the day of my arrival. This I did, and I arrived at Bucharest on Sunday morning, May 10. I had not been at my hotel more than half an hour when a Court official came into my room and handed me a printed form, asking me to come to the Palace at 5.30 the same afternoon.

The King received me in his study, conversing for some time on different topics, among which the recent assassination of the King of Portugal was mentioned. The only newspaper in Europe which at the time was said to have given a reliable and detailed account of that tragedy, as also of the causes which had led up to it, was the *Frankfurter Zeitung*.

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Nothing much on this phase of the subject had I seen in the English papers. This rather surprised the King, who told me that a relation of his had been in Lisbon two years previously, and had reported to him the unsatisfactory state of affairs then prevailing in Portugal. From that time onwards the King told me he had been anxiously concerned lest matters should have a bad ending (*Ein schlechtes Ende nehmen*).

His Majesty asked how long I proposed to stay in Bucharest, and if I had any friends there. I had been apprised beforehand that a guest could not expect to receive the same attention in Bucharest, where the King was absorbed in affairs of State, as at Ragatz; and as I did not wish to trespass on His Majesty's kindness, and was, moreover, anxious to get home, I replied that I proposed to leave the next day. "Then you must come and have tea with the Queen to-morrow," he said. The King also suggested that I should pay a visit to his castle at Sinaja on my way back, and he would see that I was shown all over the place. I took advantage of both these suggestions. The Queen received me the next afternoon in her drawing-room, and we had tea in the garden, at which the King and the Roumanian Ambassador in Berlin were also present. *Carmen Sylva's* great charm of manner is too well known to need any emphasis on my part. Her conversation, which has delighted so many—among others, Pierre Loti, whose work, *Les Pêcheurs d'Islande*, Her Majesty has translated—was as gracious, bright, and sparkling as ever. In the interval between my visit to Ragatz her hair had turned snow white. Much has been written regarding *Carmen Sylva's* many natural gifts, but I do not remember ever coming across a single reference to the Queen's extraordinary industry, which is perhaps her most marked characteristic. Her translation of Paul de Saint Victor's monumental work, *Les Deux Masques*, over 1500 printed pages, a copy of which she sent me, would alone entitle the Queen of Roumania to a high place among the world's strenuous workers.

On my return to England I heard, from an indirect source, that had I been able to stay in Bucharest a couple of days longer the King had intended to invite me to accompany him down

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the Danube on a festive progress of the Royal Family, which was to begin on the following Thursday and extend as far as the Black Sea. When I wrote to thank the King for his kind reception I also expressed my disappointment that I had missed such a favourable opportunity of seeing the country. I received a gracious letter of acknowledgment, followed by the Grand Commander's Cross and Star of the Order of the Crown of Roumania.

## CHAPTER XV

### THEODOR MOMMSEN

ANY one who happened to be in Berlin at the beginning of the eighties, and was in the habit of riding in the tramcars from the Brandenburg Gate to Charlottenburg between six and eight in the evening, might often have noticed an old gentleman of striking appearance among the passengers. He was of medium height, of slight figure, his face clean-shaven and full of wrinkles, set off by a head with long, silvery hair. His dark, illuminatingly expressive eyes peered through a pair of spectacles. On entering the tram he alway looked out for a seat near the lamp at the back of the car, and invariably succeeded in obtaining it. Thereupon he would draw a newspaper from his pocket, and soon be engrossed in its contents, notwithstanding the dimness of the light. When the tramcar stopped at Charlottenburg he had generally finished reading. He would get out and hurry along to the March *Strasse*, in which his unpretentious house stood. This was Theodor Mommsen, the renowned historian of ancient Rome. He was well known to his fellow passengers, or such of them as were inhabitants of Charlottenburg, and every one made room for him. Even if a stranger happened to recognise him, and nudged his neighbour, saying, "That is Mommsen," he was sure to be snubbed for his pains, or in reply to be told, curtly, "Never mind." Thus Mommsen was never molested; and that was exactly what his fellow citizens had in view by their studied neglect of him. They were proud of his world-wide reputation, and they felt honoured by the consciousness that he was one of their fellow townsmen. They had a notion that he must devote all his spare time to his studies, and that he was thus perforce obliged to read

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his newspaper in the tramcar. For his books awaited him at home, where he was in the habit of working till long past midnight ; so that he could not have had many hours to spare for sleep, if he wanted to be up early and back again in Berlin at eight o'clock to deliver his daily lecture at the University. Though nobody ventured to speak to the old gentleman when homeward bound, many were the stories told of him in the tramcar in the course of the year ; and, what is somewhat unusual with tongue-play in Germany, they were all to his honour. When, in the sixties, Napoleon the Third was busy writing his " Life of Cæsar," and all Europe was in anxious expectation as to the outcome, he solicited Mommsen's co-operation ; but Mommsen politely declined. Some time afterwards Napoleon caused the history of the princely family of Borghese to be written, and he again approached Mommsen, and asked him whether he would consent to revise the proofs. This Mommsen agreed to do, but there again he declined to accept the 50,000 francs which the Emperor had set apart for him in return for his services. The soul of the German professor stood above cash payment, even from an emperor. He had been too busy with the dust of whole dynasties of Cæsars to attach much importance to the favours or the rewards of monarchs. It was also related that on one occasion, during Mommsen's residence in Italy, when making an excursion in the neighbourhood of Rome with some tourists, the party was stopped by brigands. The latter, whilst busy rifling the company's pockets, inquired their names. " Sono Theodoro Mommsen !" was the choleric Professor's indignant reply. Whereupon the chief of the band stayed his hand. He said he would scorn to rob one who had done so much for Italy's renown. It was indeed a queer contrast of extremes that the mere name of the German *savant*, which could disarm the rapacity of an Italian brigand, should at another period of his life have been able to add to the ill-feeling between two great nations.

I was brought into contact with the renowned historian under circumstances which at the time caused some commotion in editorial dovecots in England, Germany, and the United States. It was in the midst of the Boer War. The *North*

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*American Review*, through its London editor, was endeavouring to obtain some representative German expressions of opinion on the rights and wrongs of the struggle. This gentleman had already applied to Mommsen direct, asking the Professor to name his own terms for an expression of opinion, however short and guarded it might be, but he had met with a curt refusal. The German scholar, in this like Browning, the poet, was not to be influenced by pecuniary considerations. Thereupon the editor consulted me, and I wrote to my friend, Professor Hans Delbrueck, on the subject. The reply came that, although Mommsen persisted in his refusal to contribute an article, in view of my sympathetic record in connection with German affairs he was willing to meet me half-way. He suggested that I should write him a short letter, succinctly embodying the specific questions which the *North American Review* wished to put to him. To this he would send a reply; the two letters, question and answer, to be simultaneously published side by side in the *North American Review*. This was duly carried out, and the result, as aforesaid, created quite a sensation. Mommsen, who, all through his life, had been a staunch Liberal, and one of the most whole-hearted admirers England ever possessed on the Continent, was dubbed an Anglophobe, and my humble self everything that is reprehensible for "aiding and abetting" the publication of a document which at the time undoubtedly added to the unpopularity of England among the intellectual classes on the Continent. To-day, I do not hesitate to express my regret, for reasons which it is needless to specify here, that I had anything to do with the business. But at that time, in common with many other Englishmen, I was in strong sympathy with the Boers in their struggle for independence, and saw nothing irregular in my action. Another consideration which weighed with me from the point of view of journalistic ethics was the reasoning that if the London editor of the *North American Review*, an Englishman with distinguished connections, who at one time had been a Member of Parliament and had filled a Court appointment, saw no harm in "aiding and abetting"



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the publication of Mommsen's views on the Boer War, it was not for a comparatively unimportant person like myself to have any scruples on the subject.

Being on a visit to Berlin shortly afterwards, I called on Professor Mommsen at his villa in Charlottenburg. Not finding him at home, I left a card, and early the next morning he returned my call at the Hotel Continental and invited me to lunch for the following day. When I presented myself the door was opened by a young lady, whom I fear I mistook for a servant. She relieved me of my overcoat, showed me into a drawing-room, and, to my surprise, said, "My father will be with you in a minute, sir." She was one of Mommsen's daughters. Only afterwards did I learn that the great historian was prolific both as a father and as an author of books. He had ten or more children. My fellow guests on the occasion were Dr. Nathan, editor of the German weekly, *Die Nation*, and Professor Max Lenz, the historian, Rector of Berlin University in 1912.

Although Mommsen was at that time over eighty-three years of age, he was a bright companion at table; he still plied a vigorous knife and fork, and took his fair share of a choice *crû* of his favourite Sicilian vintage.

The South African War was uppermost in men's minds, and in connection therewith the strong outburst of sympathy with the Boers which it had provoked throughout Germany was already a topic of conversation. According to Professor Mommsen the unpopularity of England in Germany was not directly owing to the Boer War, although that event had set it aflame and caused it to transgress all defensible limits. This he deplored as serving no useful purpose; but he considered that it was an inevitable outcome of long standing, accumulating grievances, partly of a political and partly of a sentimental nature. There were the grievances of a newcomer against an old-established firm in the comity of nations and *vice versa*. As to political grievances, the real offence lay in the antagonistic attitude English statesmen had adopted towards Germany throughout the struggle for national

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unity—from the Danish War of 1864 to the Franco-German War of 1870. The effect of this action of England, unlike many other transitory manifestations of political leanings in history—as, for instance, the traditional enmity of France to the House of Habsburg—had not passed away with the memory of the generations which witnessed it. It had become part of German history, and as such, together with previous political *data* of a kindred nature, had through school tuition and treatises of leading historians<sup>1</sup> become part and parcel of national tradition and feeling, ready to rise up afresh on every occasion which brought back the memory of the interfering part England was alleged to have played in German politics. In so far as dislike of England had a sentimental basis, Professor Mommsen saw in it the reaction against a former exaggerated German admiration for everything English, from the days, as he himself expressed it, when “many an English tailor was accepted in the Fatherland as a real live lord.” This reaction had been quickened by the awakening of strong feeling of national self-consciousness, which resulted from the unification of Germany; and, again, perhaps to an even greater degree, by the giant strides Germany had made since the 1870 war in the accumulation of wealth by commerce and industry. These achievements somehow produced a feeling in Germany that England had been unduly overrated, which was likewise set in further relief by the widely advertised English taunt that inferior articles were “Made in Germany.” As an additional, though minor, factor in this list of national grievances Mommsen put the overbearing conduct of many English travellers in Germany; one instance of which, connected with a notorious incident at Bonn,<sup>2</sup> in Lord Palmerston’s days, was dealt with in Parliament, and actually led to serious diplomatic discussions between Prussia and England. And,

<sup>1</sup> Many German political writers, notably Treitschke and Lothar Bucher, have propounded the idea that Prussia was shorn of her legitimate fruits of victory by Lord Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and that if Germany had been allowed to retain Alsace the war of 1870 might never have taken place.

<sup>2</sup> *Fracas* of Captain Macdonald with a railway guard at Bonn, September 1860.

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lastly, the pointed and unfriendly action of certain organs of the English Press was cited by Mommsen as an obligato accompaniment of disharmony from early days down to our times. "Your Press," he said, "like its Parisian sister, has become a public nuisance." The Boer War came as a final straw to the camel's load of injury. If Professor Mommsen cited these *data* to me as explanations of German ill-feeling towards England, he was very far from asserting that they were a sufficient justification for the outburst of animosity which the Boer War called forth. As a life-long German Liberal, who had suffered legal prosecution for his opinions, he had always been a staunch admirer of English political institutions; and his eminently legal mind disdained a sentimental harping on grievances long since dead and buried, the recalling of which could do no practical good to any one in our day. He preferred to dwell upon that which was still left of his earlier faith in English greatness; and even down to the last he was ready to pay his unstinted tribute of admiration to the broad-minded policy of England, "which opens to the stranger every harbour it acquires." However, in common with many other German public men, Mommsen had openly proclaimed his sympathy with the Boers. For all that he was surprised to find that his action excited such angry comment in England as it did; in the first place, because he had always considered England the one country above all others in which people were at liberty to give free expression to their opinions without let or hindrance—a liberty they had ever exercised unrestrictedly, whether it ruffled foreign susceptibilities or not. He would have laughed anybody to scorn who had doubted his patriotism because he opposed Prince Bismarck when he happened to disagree with his policy, and so he was surprised to find himself reviled as an enemy of England because his juridical sense of what he considered to be the righteous law of nations had to his thinking been outraged by the questionable origin of the Boer War: notably by the Jameson raid, the responsibility for which he considered did not rest upon the English nation, but on Messrs. Rhodes and Chamberlain.

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Another feature of the case increased his surprise at the animosity he had excited, and this was that his own view that the origin of the Boer War constituted a wrong exactly coincided with the openly expressed views of a number of well-known Englishmen, some of whom did not hesitate to give vehement expression thereto on the platform and in the Press. Had it come to this, that we must worship our friends blindly, applaud their every action, or straightway stand accused of being affected with mad antipathy, with that dreadful disease known to us as "Anglophobia"? Like another strong fighter, Gambetta, who, when threatened by his constituents, turned upon them and told them to their faces that he would pursue them to their lairs, Mommsen declined to accept the *mandat impératif* to approve everything from anybody or any conglomeration of "bodies," corporations, communities, or nationalities. He stood in his own person as a distinguished exponent of the fearless veracity of a whole race, and no scurrility or intimidation could move that old man one hair's breadth from the proud line of independent conviction. He claimed to exercise in his private capacity the same right of criticism which others, more particularly Englishmen, had always arrogated to themselves. For all that, he was not rabid. He could not understand the resentment of his English friends, and, whilst deploring it, accepted its consequences in a regretful but philosophical spirit. But what he most particularly objected to was that a German professor, Max Müller, domiciled in England, should have taken upon himself to enlighten him with regard to a situation concerning which Mommsen considered that he required no enlightenment, least of all from such a quarter.

"I can well understand," he said, "that the English could not afford to allow the power of the Boers to develop to such an extent as might eventually have threatened British supremacy in South Africa. In the same way we on our Eastern frontier could not allow the Polish element to swamp our own German nationality. I could even sympathise with and welcome British supremacy, but not with Mr. Rhodes as 'pace-maker'" (he used this word in English).

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Neither did Mommsen allow his antagonism to the origin of the Boer War, nor the comments his attitude had provoked in the English Press (nor even the seizing of the German ship, the *Bundesrath*, by the English, which had called forth a storm of indignation in Germany), to carry him beyond the exact limitations he had set to his criticism of English policy. For when one of the guests present expressed himself in angry terms with regard to the supposed indignity which Germany had been exposed to by the *Bundesrath* incident, and said that only a strong German fleet could obviate such occurrences in the future, Mommsen replied drily, "Such disagreeable incidents (*Chicanen*) may have to be faced in the life of nations, without necessarily involving any great hardship or indignity; they must be put up with as best as they can be. Or would you perhaps be prepared to stake our naval existence on a German Nelson?" But if Mommsen took upon himself to criticise the political action of England, at least he was equally frank and uncompromising with regard to other countries, his own included.

Mommsen took an unfavourable view of the future of Austria. He said that the battle of Sadowa in its consequences had spelt *Finis Austriae*. The *Ausgleich* with Hungary was nothing more than a *Moschus Kur*, a musk cure—musk being the supposed remedy for a patient in *extremis* with a weak heart. "Austria seems inevitably destined," he said: "to become the Turkey of Europe (*die Europäische Türkei*), a conglomeration of States, each interminably struggling against the rest."

The present state of Germany was also very far from satisfying the eminent historian of Rome. It worried him to think that the balance of earnestness and discipline among German political parties seemed to be with the Centre and the Social Democrats, whereas Germany is so situated that she cannot possibly afford to dispense with a strong monarchical, agricultural population. I asked him what development of landed interests his wide experience of other civilisations might have suggested to him as likely to be most suited

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to the future of Germany. Although as a Liberal he would have scant sympathies with the *Junker*, he could not well lose sight of the great services the landed gentry of Prussia had contributed to the unification of Germany by their devotion to the career of arms; and all authorities seemed to agree in connecting the downfall of great empires with the decline of their agriculture. This he did not deny, and replied that he had formed certain ideas on the subject, but it would take time to explain them in the course of conversation. For the moment he was sorry to say that the trend of events pointed to a coming Absolutism in Germany. "This seems to me the only possible outcome of the present state of affairs," he said; and added, "If the Emperor Frederick had lived, things might have been different."

There was, however, one feature of German life in the present day which called forth Mommsen's unqualified admiration. It was the extraordinary development of the large German towns, both as regards outside appearance, improved sanitation and cleanliness, and, above all, the comparative absence of degrading poverty. He thought these things reflected honour on German civilisation. It was a source of pride to him to think of the ability and the high standard of honesty and administrative talent which characterises municipal government in Germany generally. This upraising of the German cities seemed to him destined to bring back to them on a vastly enlarged scale a *renaissance* of the splendours of the German cities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Mommsen declared this to be one of the striking features of European life at the end of the nineteenth century. To a guest who mentioned a recent instance of a chief magistrate of a great foreign city being admonished on the day of his installation that it was hoped he would succeed in clearing his character from certain financial entanglements, Mommsen replied, "That indeed would be impossible with us."

In the course of further conversation, reference was made to Mommsen's long sojourn in Italy. On being reminded what a

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PROFESSOR MOMMSEN





## THEODOR MOMMSEN

popular figure he had always been in that country, for the fame of which he had done so much, he replied that it was not so serious (*gefährlich*) with his Italian popularity. "The Italians are in some ways much more Chauvinistic than the French, more particularly in their jealousy of German *savants*. This is probably because they have so few of their own," he said; "whereas in Paris, *parmi les intellectuels*, there is a much more generous recognition of merit of other countries. This is natural, because the French have so many distinguished scholars of their own that they have no cause for petty jealousy."

On returning to the drawing-room we passed before Lenbach's wonderful portrait of our host on an easel, and in a corner of the room we caught sight of his bust by Begas. Mommsen stopped our expression of admiration for the former by telling us of a Frenchman who boasted of the possession of twenty-one portraits of himself. "I have already got far too many 'self-portraits,'" he said jokingly; "but I hope I shall never attain to that Frenchman's degree of distinction."

As is well known, one of Mommsen's last actions was to pen an article pleading for a better understanding between England and Germany. Whatever might have been his momentary irritation he did not allow his views on particular questions to affect his convictions on broader issues. One of these had always been and remained to the last a dominant conviction of the vast common interests of Germany and England; particularly as represented by the educated minority, the *Intellectuellen*, as he called the best representatives of both countries, for the benefit of the civilisation of the world.

At the time when Prince Bismarck's animosity towards Mommsen was particularly marked, one night the latter was walking home with a friend, when he suddenly turned to him and remarked: "After all is said and done, what a calamity it is for us that political passion should deprive us of the privilege of mixing socially with such a man!"

So also on the closing in of life's long day was it with this fearless old fighter in the cause of what he held to be right and

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truth. He said to himself, "What a pity that two great nations of kindred race should remain at loggerheads!" He did not hesitate to run the risk of being thought weak and inconsistent by his more militant countrymen when he asked for a truce and a better understanding with a foreign but kindred nation, which, even by its anger, paid indirect homage to his importance—to the eminence of an old man, holding no office, possessed of no power but that which intellect and lofty character still sometimes confer upon a private citizen, even in Germany, in this bustling, glittering, emotional world of ours.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PRINCE REUSS VII

My "Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck" appeared in the autumn of 1902, simultaneously in America, England and Germany. Shortly afterwards a letter in a lady's handwriting was forwarded to me from my German publishers. It was from Princess Henry VII. Reuss, wife of the well-known diplomatist of that name,<sup>1</sup> and contained an intimation that the Prince had read my book with interest, felt drawn towards those who had been on friendly terms with Prince Bismarck, and hoped that I would come and see him. I replied that I was unfortunately not in a position to undertake what Bismarck had termed "decorative journeys," but, nevertheless, I would not fail to pay my respects to the Prince when next in Germany.

Baron Robert von Keudell,<sup>2</sup> with whom I was in correspondence at the time, wrote me a letter (February 18, 1903), congratulating me by anticipation on the privilege of making the acquaintance of so distinguished a man as Prince Reuss, of whom he said:

"He is more thoroughly acquainted with the diplomatic history of Europe from 1866 down to about 1895 than any

<sup>1</sup> Prince of a younger branch of the German Sovereign House of Reuss. Statesman and Prussian General of Cavalry; was successively German Ambassador in Petersburg, Constantinople and Vienna, in which last capacity he negotiated the Treaty of Alliance between Austria and Germany in 1879. He retired from service in 1894 and died in 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Distinguished Prussian diplomatist, many years in the Foreign Office under Bismarck; from 1876-82 German Ambassador in Rome; personal friend of the Bismarck family, concerning which he published most interesting reminiscences.

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other living person, not even excepting the Italian statesman Nigra, who knows nothing about Germany. Prince Reuss is as familiar with the history of the Napoleonic Court as with that of Petersburg, Constantinople, and Vienna. I spent a couple of very pleasant days at Trebschen some years ago, and hope to go there again next June.”<sup>1</sup>

It was Prince Reuss who, as German Ambassador in Vienna, concluded in 1879 the famous Austro-German Alliance which has since formed the fundamental basis of the policy of the two central European Great Powers.

One bright July afternoon I was driving in a well-appointed hickory brake and pair through some beautiful woods in the domain of Prince Reuss in the Province of Brandenburg, between the town of Züllichau and the *Schloss* of Trebschen; a very capacious and picturesque old residence, which Prince Reuss adapted to modern comforts, with a beautiful park in the rear. I met with the kindest reception, and spent three delightful days in the best of company; the circumstance of my acquaintance with Prince Bismarck providing a fruitful theme of conversation. Both the Prince and the Princess were very musical, and in the evening a quartette was performed in the concert-room by executants who came in from the neighbourhood.

Next morning the Princess showed me over her sanatorium, a large handsome building, which she had caused to be erected, perfectly equipped for hospital work, situate in the immediate vicinity of and nearly opposite the *Schloss*, with direct ingress for the patients into the park. For years she vainly endeavoured to draw a stream of patients to Trebschen; but she has now made the building over to a girls' school, a purpose for which the large airy structure is eminently suited. Its delightful situation, including a free run of the Prince's park, and the high reputation of those who have undertaken its management, should be a guarantee of its success.

After breakfast we regularly took a walk in the park, where the unusual size of the trees had excited my surprise

<sup>1</sup> Herr von Keudell died shortly afterwards, in April 1903.

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on my arrival. It reminded me of the parks of some great English families.

"Yes, our park is almost unique in these parts—indeed, a curiosity," said Princess Reuss. "It was the very first on the Continent to be laid-out in accordance with English taste. It was about the year 1775 when Jean Jacques Rousseau's ideas about the return to nature came into vogue and had a most beneficial influence in their way. This grand old park of Trebschen, with its beautiful timber, is quite typical of that period, for whatever has been renovated since has always been carried out in the spirit of that period and very often under impressions produced by travelling *souvenirs* gathered in England. Thus English influences can be traced here, though adapted to the climate and to the vegetation of Brandenburg, whilst utilising the natural woodland characteristics of the neighbourhood.

"It was a lady who planned it, a relation of the Reuss family, a Countess Reden. She was the founder of the Bible Society in Germany, had many English friends, and in late years became intimately acquainted with King Frederick William IV. Her father, who came from Brunswick, was a Count Riedesel. He accompanied the Brunswick troops as their commander to Canada when they were 'sold' by their Sovereign to fight for England in the American War of Independence. His wife and children followed him there. Thus a connection with England and English taste came to influence the German homes of the Reuss family. This intercourse continued during those long years when England, as the enemy of France, was, as it were, the last hope of the Continent. Countess Reden's biography, after it had been published in Germany, came out in an English edition. It was originally written by a very distinguished pen—Princess Leonore Reuss, *née* Countess Stolberg-Wernigerode."

We took sundry drives in the neighbourhood, visiting some foresters and other dwellers on the estate. The ease and comfort visible and the mutual goodwill evinced everywhere left a most pleasant memory on the mind of the visitor. My

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hostess kindly suggested that I might extend my visit, and when I regretted my inability to do so graciously pressed me to come again.

My second visit to Trebschen a couple of years later fell in the shooting season, in the latter part of August. The younger generation went out partridge-shooting with the guests, while Prince and Princess Reuss took their easels out of doors, making sketches in water-colours from nature, and very good ones too, the Prince, in particular, being an accomplished artist. When we returned to the *château* with our bag of game we inspected the day's work of the master and mistress of the house. We had wrought havoc amongst the feathered tribe, whilst they had passed their time in reproducing something beautiful from nature. Prince Reuss was close upon eighty years of age at that time.

There is no country in which ladies of rank are greater sticklers for etiquette in their dealings with the outer world than in Germany, living what they call *standesgemäss*; but there is also no country in which they are more domesticated and more concentrated on the details of housekeeping. The salads would be mixed at table either by the lady of the house or the daughter, and if a guest showed a preference for any dish the chances were that on his next visit he would find it figuring in the first day's *menu*. If it was the shooting season, when the party started early in the morning, it would have been considered poor treatment of a guest if the lady of the house and her daughter were not down to breakfast, and to wish the shooting-party *Waidmanns Heil*!

Prince Reuss loved to sit on the terrace facing the park surrounded by his family circle, basking in the sun, on a beautiful summer day. Although of a naturally reserved and retiring disposition, as were the well-bred Germans of the Prince's generation, he would readily enter into conversation with a visitor in whom he might presume a certain familiarity with political matters in which he himself had played a leading part. And when he did so it was with an engaging frankness, so free from the personal note that it was as if listening to the

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experiences of a third person rendered in the form of the historical present. Such communications could only come as a high compliment to those who knew that the Prince had always declined to entertain the appeals of the professional memoir-hunters of the German periodical press, and had never allowed anything to be published in which he himself had played a part. Thus what he said possessed not only the charm of unadorned personal narrative, but came as a revelation of important historical matter—as such, indeed, even at the present moment.

It is well known that in the critical days following the battle of Sadowa, the King of Prussia sent Prince Reuss, until then Prussian Minister at Munich, to Paris on a special mission to the Emperor Napoleon III., a task calling for most delicate handling.

“The Emperor Napoleon had telegraphed to the King the day after the battle of Sadowa, offering his mediation between the contending Powers. The answer we sent was friendly, but without entering into the subject, for we were in a dilemma how to meet this interference, being determined to follow up the advantages already gained.

“Bismarck asked me whether I was prepared to start at once on a mission to Paris, a question which I answered in the affirmative. Bismarck continued: ‘Prussia can only entertain an armistice if the fortresses of Koeniggraetz, Josefstadt, and Leitmeritz are handed over to us and an extensive line of demarcation, including Prague, be agreed upon. We would not allow our advance to be stopped pending negotiations.’ Bismarck mentioned as among the proposed conditions of peace a reconstruction of the Federal body (*Bundesreform*) upon a basis already known to the Emperor Napoleon and approved by him.

““The Elbe Duchies are to come to Prussia, several of the governments which are inimical to us (but which are not specified) are to be changed, military conventions to be arranged with others, and a Parliament based upon direct

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election is to be called.' These were the approximate instructions with which I was to accompany the autograph letter of the King, which was less precisely worded.

"‘If Napoleon,’ continued Bismarck, ‘should not show himself agreeable to our propositions, and intends to oppose our plans and thus drive us to extremes, you are to give him to understand that we are prepared to light up a conflagration in Germany. We do not shrink from the alternative of appealing to the German democracy, of proclaiming *Die Grundrechte*<sup>1</sup> and accepting the title of Emperor, and Napoleon will see that he is mistaken if he reckons upon the help of the revolution in Germany. If he should mention Villafranca and reproach us that it was we who forced him to conclude peace before his programme was carried out, you can tell him that this is not true. The Note which at that time we sent to Vienna giving notice of our intention to cease to remain neutral arrived too late, and, unfortunately, the Emperor Napoleon had concluded peace too hastily. If the question of compensation should arise, you will give him to understand that German territory can in no case be given up, but if he should seek compensation elsewhere this would not concern us. The aim of your Paris mission, after having delivered the autograph letter of King William, would be merely to show yourself there and to keep the French occupied.’

"In other words, I was to put myself in evidence as one who had been an eye-witness of our incredible successes, and enter into casual conversations, ‘just to hear what people might say.’

"My visit had already been announced in writing to Napoleon III. I arrived in Paris in the morning, and at two o'clock had to present myself at the Tuileries. I went in my military uniform.

<sup>1</sup> As the so-called *Grundrechte* are understood the guaranteed rights and liberties of the citizen, which in the revolution of 1848 were held to be the fundamental rights of the subject; thus what we understand under the Bill of Rights and what the French termed *les Droits de l'Homme* in the French Revolution.



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General Frossard was in the anteroom, a decided Prussophobe, who had in advance prophesied our inevitable defeat with pedantic certainty. Colonel Stoffel was also present. The starchy attitude of the General, with whom I was previously well acquainted, was amusing. He could not hide his displeasure at meeting one who came direct in triumph, as it were, from the battlefield of Sadowa; and this attitude of his was in a measure indicative for me of the feeling which dominated Paris at that moment. Consternation reigned. People had expected something quite different. Only a few days previously Paris had been illuminated because Austria had ceded Venice to Napoleon, who had passed this precious present on to Italy. Victor Emmanuel, however, had been true to his word not to conclude peace without Prussia, and, to the great dismay of the French, had declined to accept this Danæan gift. The climax of disappointment was that victorious and lucky Prussia should have found an ally into the bargain! The whole plot so cleverly conceived by Austria and accepted by France had failed. Poor Metternich (the Austrian Ambassador in Paris) was in despair, Walewski in a fury of passion, the politicians of the clubs were staggered, the Emperor was in a dire dilemma. It was only among the lower orders of the population that one met with that kind of sympathy which the uneducated always feel for a deed of energy crowned with success.

“Napoleon received me in a friendly spirit, but the interview did not leave a very satisfactory impression on my mind. I missed that calm deliberation and clearness which at other times I had been accustomed to observe in this Sovereign. The Emperor did not seem to have a good conscience, and was evidently oppressed by a certain perplexity how to get out of a difficult situation, which, as regards Italy, he had created for himself. He wanted to know the conditions of peace which would follow upon an armistice. I replied that this was outside my mission. But I could assure him that King William would be exceedingly moderate in his demands, despite the feeling of the Prussian people, who were beginning to insist

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categorically that Prussia should not give up her conquests; the Emperor himself had declared that our project of reform of the Federal Constitution would not collide with the interests of France. We would adhere to this. Great was my surprise to hear that Napoleon was only cognisant in a general way of this project of reform. 'Possibly Count von der Goltz (Prussian Ambassador in Paris) might have spoken to him about it,' he said. 'It was also possible that he (the Emperor) had not expressed himself unfavourably with regard to it; but in no wise could he remember to have definitely approved of it.' He said he did not even know what its exact nature was. I did not hide my astonishment on hearing this statement. I assured the Emperor that King William was honestly convinced that Napoleon had approved of these plans, and that we could firmly rely on his approval. The conversations which Bismarck had had with Napoleon in 1865 at Biarritz, before this project of reform had been ventilated by Prussia, were bound to have conveyed the conviction to the King that Napoleon was in full agreement with the plans of Prussia.

"Napoleon was evidently in a quandary as to how to extricate himself from this series of facts which told against him. He said that Prussia, without Austria as a counterweight, would become too powerful a neighbour for France. The quintessence of Napoleon's attitude seemed to be pre-occupation regarding the increased power of Prussia, the jealousy of the French in connection therewith, and the duplicity of the Austrians, who had led him to believe that they had 100,000 men under the walls of Olmütz and intended to give battle there, whereas they were now being driven back upon Vienna and retreating into Hungary. Napoleon declared that we should be straightforward with him ('avant tout être franc avec moi') and communicate our conditions of peace and our intentions generally to him. He also wanted us to insist upon Italy ('ils sont si absurdes') making peace simultaneously with Austria ('ils sont si à bas, qu'ils accepteront vos conditions').

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"General Fleury alone was favourably inclined towards us. Napoleon, evidently much preoccupied, came back again and again as to what were our real conditions of peace—and what after? Only with difficulty and under certain modalities would he be able to control the excited feeling of the French. As to compensation, he did not formulate anything definite, but the Empress said, 'There must be a neutral State between you and us'; and, half in earnest and half in ironical jest, she endeavoured to sketch such a State with her pencil on a map of our Western frontiers. After dinner, in the Tuileries, the Emperor again seemed full of anxiety and uneasiness as he walked with me for an hour up and down the terrace planted with lime-trees in front of the Seine, continually wanting to know 'A quoi voulez-vous en venir?' (What would our annexations include?) Napoleon confessed, 'J'avoue franchement que j'ai eu tort d'accepter tout de suite le cadeau que me faisait l'Autriche en me sacrifiant la Vénétie. Mais que voulez-vous? J'ai été flatté de voir l'Autriche, vaincue par moi, m'apporter spontanément, et comme un don, la province que je n'ai pas voulu conquérir en 1859. D'un autre côté je pense qu'il serait plus simple pour les Italiens de prendre, sans coup férir, une belle province, au lieu de laisser peut-être 40,000 hommes devant les places fortes. Mais quoi qu'il en soit, c'est fait, et il faut en sortir. S'il y avait un armistice prompt, il y aurait moyen de se tirer d'affaire, et c'est pour cela que je suis si impatient d'arriver à cet armistice.'

"Napoleon was in the greatest embarrassment regarding Italy, and indeed with regard to the whole situation. He said nobody could form an adequate conception of the difficulty of his position. Imbued with the best intentions for Germany, he yet could never know whither he would be driven!"

Prince Reuss suggested that he should return to King William and report to him clearly how he had found things in France. Napoleon consented and gave him an autograph letter for the King.

Many years afterwards in Paris, at the Hôtel Continental,

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within sight of the spot where once stood the Tuileries, and which now has been converted into a beautiful garden—the very terrace, with the lime-trees still visible, in the shade of which Prince Reuss had walked with Napoleon III. on that memorable day of July 1866—there sat an old lady looking out of the hotel window. Her eyes wandered dreamily over the grounds opposite, where a heap of brickwork, a ruin, was the only remnant of former palatial splendour. When she was asked how she could possibly bear this sight, her answer came: “Oh! le passé n'existe pas pour moi!” It was the Empress Eugénie.

The last time I was at Trebschen was at Easter 1906. Prince Reuss was already ailing, and was only allowed to see visitors for a few minutes at a time. But down to the very last his interest was so vivid in everything connected with international political life that he was eager to have news from the outside world. In common with all distinguished Germans of mature age I have met, Prince Reuss was deeply concerned with the unsatisfactory relations between Germany and England. His last words to me were, “*Fahren Sie fort im guten Sinne zu wirken*” (“Continue to work in a beneficent spirit”—a reference to my literary activity at the time). Another subject of the Prince's anxiety was the growing materialism of the age, the development among the German well-to-do classes of a tendency to live for show, and the undue importance attached by the present generation to the superficialities, the external side of life, as revealed by the general craving for and the lavish and promiscuous distribution of decorations, for which Count Posadowsky has coined the phrase “*Die Veräußerlichung innerer Werthe*” (the vulgarisation of inner values).

“They may say what they will,” the Prince exclaimed, “but a decoration is (*ist und bleibt*) a means of corruption (*Ein Corruptionsmittel*).” It was on this occasion that I met two sisters of the Köstritz branch of the Reuss family domiciled at Ernstbrunn in Austria, the elder of whom, Princess Eleonore,

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has since married King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and is now Tsaritsa of the Bulgarians. She had only recently returned from Russia, where she had gone through the Russo-Japanese campaign as a nurse to the Russian wounded. She had been appointed by the Grand Duchess Wladimir as matron of the hospital train which her Imperial Highness, as head of the Red Cross Committee, called into activity for the war. With her staff of nurses the Princess underwent hardships of which the severities of the climate were not the least. On her return home she went out as a simple district nurse, helping thereby a small sisterhood of deaconesses. Her sister, also a trained nurse, did some splendid service as matron of a hospital in Hanover. Ever eager to help whenever she could, *payant de sa personne*, she and her sister belong to the increasing number of ladies of the upper classes on the Continent, not of Germany alone, to whom high birth does not mean an idle existence, but a life of all-round usefulness, for which Princess Eleonore has since found an abundant scope in her new sphere. She had read an article which I had written in the *Deutsche Rundschau* on my experiences in Moscow during the revolution of 1905-6, and was much interested in the sad conditions prevailing there. She was afraid that the revolutionary movement might not lead to any tangible benefits for what she termed the *real* people: the soldiers, the sailors, and the peasants. "I have gone through those hard times of war and revolution with them," she said, "nursing them, watching them, and caring for them so long, that I learnt to love and respect their admirable qualities, their patient endurance of suffering, their right feeling and sound common sense. These in the long run will, I hope and trust, help them to their proper place and keep them in the right way."

Altogether I found in this distinguished family that birth is an incentive, and does not constitute a claim in itself. Thus the younger generation is brought up in modesty to look up to their seniors, to respect age, to admire high character and intellectual attainments wherever they are met with; not

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to put themselves forward with undue familiarity in conversation, but to practise reserve and self-restraint.

Princess Reuss in particular, like her aunt, the Empress Augusta, considers that her Weimarian traditions, the friendship between Goethe and her ancestors, lay a special obligation upon her and her family to lead useful and ennobling lives, and above all to foster the traditions of her House in this direction. Indeed, the more that I saw of this cultivated family circle the more I became convinced that balance of character as exemplified in happy family life, sincerity, lowliness of heart, not self-indulgence and brutal self-assertion, were at the root of almost everything worth achieving that has been accomplished in Germany in our time. Where these elements have been lacking—even in the case of genius—the work done has been of a devastating, sirocco-like kind, and the ultimate benefit to the community of a questionable character.

We read in Prince Hohenlohe's Memoirs that when Princess Marie Alexandrine, daughter of the late reigning Grand Duke Karl Alexander of Saxe-Weimar, married Prince Reuss, the match was held in some of the Court circles to be almost a *mésalliance* on her part. Such are the chimera to which those still cling whose main chance of retaining their privileged position must ultimately depend upon the distinction of character exemplified by the best among their caste.

Thus, although it was a new departure for the daughter of a reigning Sovereign to become an Ambadress, the Princess herself rejoiced that her marriage should have opened up to her a beneficent sphere of activity in assisting her husband to serve his country as the representative of his Sovereign in his Ambassadorship abroad. Many keen observers of Germany are of opinion that the hold of the German Sovereign Princes over the affections of their countrymen depends upon their human attributes, and upon little else. Germany will never forget that it was a Duke of Saxe-Weimar who befriended Goethe, and even German democracy will bear in mind that, after the war of Liberation, of all German Sovereigns he was the only one who kept his promise to grant a constitution to his countrymen.

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Shortly after my return to England, in the summer of 1906, I received a telegram from Princess Reuss announcing the death of her husband, regarding whom one who knew him intimately writes me as follows :

“ His political instinct, his tact, his delicacy of touch in the management of affairs, were remarkable. For at certain critical junctures the alternative of peace and war may be said to have been balanced at the point of his pen.

“ It impressed me deeply to find him, at such a moment, sitting in prayer in front of his writing materials. ‘ May God grant to me His grace to give correct expression to the right thoughts, so that bloodshed may be avoided,’ and God heard his prayer, so full of simple faith and trust. There was rarely his like, so absolutely exempt was he from every-day vanity and the pettiness of things. He combined rare modesty with a certain loftiness ; the union of a chastened spirit with the wide range of a superior mind, and with it there was a delightful buoyancy and freshness about him. I fancy it was his love of art and nature that gave this mellowness to his mind. It enabled him to see so much of the beauty of things, so much of their deeper import. This again may have had something to do with his charming social qualities, his keen sense of humour, for he thus perceived many things unseen by his *entourage*. The circumstance that he was a keen sportsman and an excellent shot also brought him into constant touch with nature. It was interesting to see how the artist and the sportsman were blended in him and completed each other. They kept him young. Thus he was always the best playmate for his children, their constant companion, and the source of their happiness, as they were of his. He spread sunshine over the house, and created that happily blended atmosphere in which the young generation grew up.

“ It was your good fortune to know him and to have felt the charm of his personality ; I wish you had seen more of him.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### WEIMAR

IN the summer of 1903 I paid a short visit to Weimar, for which purpose Princess Reuss gave me several letters of introduction, notably one to Frau Elisabeth Foerster-Nietzsche, the sister of the great writer. Weimar had been the Princess's Thuringian home, where she was born, and is a shrine in which everything is sacred to her, more particularly that belonging to the great past; and every one making a pilgrimage there would be sure in advance of her interest and encouragement.

About a hundred years ago Goethe, Schiller, and the Humboldts dominated not only Weimar but the intellectual world of Germany. Their praise could make, their disapproval mar, a reputation. To-day this autocratic power over the minds of their fellows is possessed by no man. The louder the shout of the megaphone, the shriller the note of the steam-whistle, the less heed people pay to them; till at last they pass as unnoticed as the monotonous moan of the "siren" at sea. Nietzsche embodies the revolt against this shouting tendency on the one hand and the callous indifference of the crowd on the other, and that one-sided education, which the Germans term *Halb-bildung*, which produces a surface familiarity with a host of things and a real knowledge of nothing, the aggressive arrogance of which was never more rampant than to-day, and has aroused the concern of the cultivated. It is well authenticated that certain writings of Goethe and Schopenhauer, each in his time, wrought havoc upon unbalanced minds. Nietzsche, by his passionate intellectuality clothed in the most alluring literary form, has achieved the feat of appealing simultaneously to the intellectual and the moralist,

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the buffoon and the immoralist of every country. The former take Nietzsche's ideas into account, weigh and discuss them; the latter strut about braying—Bottom-like—in Nietzsche's lion skin, to the discomfort and annoyance of the sober members of the community. It is noteworthy that Nietzsche himself foresaw and foretold this dubious outcome of his own writings; for whereas he naturally intended to appeal to the higher instincts of mankind, the vain ass, the neurotic, the degenerate, the erotomaniac, and a host of other candidates for criminal honours have recognised their own image in the figure of the Superman which Nietzsche held up to them and rejoiced accordingly. Thus he laid down the axiom that the first converts to a creed do not necessarily prove anything *against* it.

Whatever may be thought of Nietzsche's Iconoclastic propaganda, the man who had the audacity to tell his countrymen they have no future,<sup>1</sup> that their nobility has been vitiated by Christianity and alcohol<sup>2</sup> and cannot take rank with that of France and England, possesses that supreme degree of moral courage without which no gift of intellect or insight can make a prophet or a reformer. Fortunately for the progress of mankind, for the welfare of the human race in general, the strongest and the best will always decline to accept the Categorical Imperative, whether it be from a Sovereign or a self-styled prophet. Some of Nietzsche's own disciples are inclined to believe that the inevitable reaction against this latest development of the spirit of revolt may yet tend towards an early and much needed return to the recognition of Biblical Law—at least, to those paragraphs thereof which inculcate reverence and decency of conduct, and ordain:

“Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.

<sup>1</sup> *The Case against Wagner* (page 65, English edition): “The Germans themselves have no future.”

<sup>2</sup> *The Antichrist* (page 227, English edition): “The German nobility scarcely takes a place in the history of higher culture.”

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“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.”

For the moment, however, Nietzsche has become one of the driving intellectual forces identified with the little Thuringian Residenz-Stadt where he spent the last days of his life, nursed and cared for by his devoted sister.

Frau Foerster-Nietzsche is a lady of great intellectual force and combative energy, qualities which she has devoted to the task of championing the memory of her distinguished brother, to whom she was passionately attached. Moreover, she has spent £10,000 in bringing out different editions of his works. She has turned her handsome villa residence—Villa Silberblick, in the Louisenstrasse, where Nietzsche died—into a museum, called the Nietzsche Archiv, in which Nietzsche’s manuscripts and personal relics are carefully arranged and preserved for all time. A sum of £20,000 has been placed at Frau Foerster’s disposal for this purpose by a Swedish admirer of Nietzsche’s philosophy. It was there that I called upon her, and met with the kindest reception. She took me all over the house, which is beautifully situated on a hill with a broad view into the valley and the hills beyond. “Silver View” is the name which Nietzsche gave to the panorama as he sat during his years of illness looking out of the window, cogitating over the glory of life which he was prevented from enjoying, leaving him only the faculty of admiring nature in its loveliness from afar—imprisoned like Heinrich Heine in his mattressed tomb.

Those who have been privileged to come into personal contact with Nietzsche’s sister, and to take cognizance of her whole-souled devotion to her brother’s memory, can scarcely fail to have been impressed by her great courage, her exceptional mental attainments, as well as the charm of a dominant personality. Indeed, with regard to her extraordinary, almost provocative, courage, some have sought a connection here with one of Nietzsche’s favourite assertions that his family was really of Polish descent, the Polish

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women being at all times noted for their combative courage. The acrimonious personal attacks which Frau Foerster-Nietzsche has been subjected to in German periodical literature do not throw a sympathetic light on the character of certain sections of intellectual Germany of the present day ; even less do they point to the success of Nietzsche's propaganda to inculcate a higher standard of life for his countrymen, which can only be attained by a greater degree of loyalty, mutual respect, appreciation, and generosity obtaining towards each other.

Frau Foerster-Nietzsche presides in Weimar over a circle of intellectual people. She arranges lectures and discussions in which many distinguished persons take part. Visitors come from all parts of the world—India, Japan, America and Australia ; and so great has been the crush of late that she has been obliged at times to have a notice put up that the Nietzsche Archiv is closed !

Of greater pretensions, however, than this Nietzsche memorial is the Goethe and Schiller *Archiv*, from which the idea of the former was evidently derived. I brought a letter of introduction to Professor Suphan, the Director of the latter, by whom I was shown over the beautiful building. It stands on a hill, like some Greek temple, its style being obviously taken from Hellenic models, the little river Ilm flowing past through the valley, in which Goethe used to take his summer bath. It is devoted to the preservation of the Goethe and Schiller manuscripts, which are carefully arranged in showcases in the British Museum manner.

It is only since the death of Walther von Goethe (1885), a grandson and last surviving descendant of the poet, that these have been accessible to the public. He bequeathed all the literary remains of his illustrious ancestor to the mother of Princess Reuss, the Grand Duchess Sophia of Saxe Weimar, to dispose of as she might think fit ; and right worthily did she fulfil her trust. Although not a born German (she was a daughter of King William II. of the Netherlands) she was enthusiastic in her attachment to the literary traditions of Weimar. She considered this legacy in the light of a high

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honour, a weighty responsibility, and determined to deal with it, in accordance with the universal character of Goethe's genius, for the benefit of the world at large. She appealed to the most eminent authorities on Goethe lore to assist her in this endeavour. The first requirement was a suitable building in which to preserve these priceless treasures of intellectual Germany. No appeals were issued for public pecuniary support, although they would have been fully justified. Out of her own private, none too ample, fortune the Grand Duchess caused the present noble structure to be erected.

It is characteristic of the independence, not to say the almost aggressive, individuality of the world of scholarship that the generous initiative of the Grand Duchess did not at once secure its unanimous approval. Professor Hermann Grimm, the eminent Goethe scholar, for instance, did not look upon the project with a benevolent eye; it is even said that he took up an attitude of legal opposition in regard to it. It also shows the influence such men possess over the public mind that this opposition of the plain Berlin professor could have made itself felt as an inconvenience, even a hindrance. However, "All's well that ends well," and Hermann Grimm came at last to approve, to bless, and to co-operate with the Grand Duchess in her labour of examining and arranging the manuscripts and bringing out the complete edition of Goethe's works known as the "Sophien" edition. Unfortunately, Grimm's death interfered with the completion of her cherished project that he should write a standard life of Goethe, the contents of which she herself had already planned, chapter for chapter, as they are to be seen in her own handwriting in the Goethe and Schiller *Archiv*.

The building contains, in addition, a suite of comfortable rooms, where students find the quiet and congenial surroundings conducive to work. The idea of the foundress was that students from all parts should come here, as to a shrine, and take away something of its literary traditions to remain with them as a talisman through life, something of the large-mindedness of those who lived and worked here in the past, and

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of the spirit of appreciation "for the true, the beautiful, and the good," with which the Princess herself was imbued in creating this foundation. It is worthy of note that the contents of the *Archiv* have been largely increased since it was founded. The name of Schiller was added only subsequently. I myself had the good fortune to possess an autograph letter of Schiller's wife, which has also found a place here.

Among others to whom I had brought letters of introduction was Hofrath Carl Ruland. At one time private secretary and librarian to our Prince Consort, he had passed the later years of his life in Weimar, where he had been president of the Goethe Society for seven years. A tall, well-preserved, genial old gentleman—the German professor of bygone simple days with something of the courtier added—I found him surrounded by his books in a plainly furnished flat. The Hofrath was enthusiastic in his appreciation of the kindness manifested by the English Royal Family to all those who had ever served the Prince Consort; and he related to me some striking instances of the kindly recollection shown him by different members of the English Royal Family, and especially by King Edward VII.: "When King Edward's coronation was about to take place I wrote His Majesty a dutiful letter of congratulation. As you may remember, the ceremony was fixed to take place on a Thursday. I posted my letter on the previous Tuesday, hoping that it might come into his hands on the day of his coronation. But, as fate would have it, on that very Tuesday the world was startled by the news that the King had been operated on for appendicitis. In my sorrow and excitement I forgot all about my congratulatory letter. Imagine, then, my surprise when the following Sunday's post brought me a letter of thanks, with His Majesty's own autograph signature; so that he must have signed it at latest within three days of undergoing that operation! When I think of the King's illness, and the numerous letters he must have received, I confess I am still perfectly astonished at his kind thought for an old servant of his family."

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I met Herr Ruland again two years afterwards at the Schiller centenary. He died in 1907.

I had witnessed as a boy in Dresden the centenary of Schiller's birth in 1859, so I thought I should like to attend the centenary of his death, which was celebrated at Weimar in the month of May 1905, and I journeyed from England expressly for the purpose.

Many visitors had come from afar to be present at the ceremony, and those who felt that their position entitled them to do so inscribed their names at the Grand Ducal Palace. At nine o'clock in the morning the whole of Weimar was gathered together on the Markt Platz and marshalled in line by the Buergermaster, in order to walk in a procession five deep to the *Fürstengruft*, where Schiller's remains, close to those of Goethe, rest in the mausoleum beside those of the Grand Ducal family. It was a thrilling moment when the procession started, and when simultaneously all the church bells of Weimar were set ringing. We were told afterwards that this was likewise the case at the same hour throughout the whole of Germany.

An awning was erected exactly opposite Rietschel's beautiful joint statues of Goethe and Schiller in front of the theatre. There the Grand Duke, in uniform, surrounded by his suite, awaited the deputations of eighty-three different universities and high schools that had come to Weimar for the occasion. An enormous crowd filled every space, even the roofs of the houses, as the students in their picturesque garb filed past the Grand Duke.

In the evening one of Schiller's plays, *Demetrius*, was given at the Court Theatre, followed by a magnificent rendering of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with a full choir drawn from the citizens of Weimar, the ladies in white, the men in evening dress. The house in which Schiller lived and died was illuminated.

Before I left Weimar I was privileged to meet the German poet Ernst von Wildenbruch, who was staying with his wife at the Russische Hof. He intended to leave Berlin and take

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up his permanent residence in Weimar, where he owned a charming villa overlooking Goethe's garden and the Grand Ducal Park, and where for several years he was the centre of a circle of intellectual friends and admirers. But, alas! he was already suffering from heart disease, and did not live to carry out his project; and now his widow has turned his beautiful residence into a home for widows of indigent authors. Like so many other distinguished Germans I have met of recent years, Herr von Wildenbruch was much concerned over the growing estrangement between England and Germany, which he deeply deplored; for he belonged to those highly cultured Germans who, next to their own country, felt most attracted towards the land of Shakespeare and Byron. He was the author of several plays dealing with the past history of Prussia, and, being an illegitimate descendant of the House of Hohenzollern, he was looked upon by many as a literary champion of that dynasty. In later years, however, he had taken up a broader and more independent attitude, and had constituted himself the protagonist of the literary heroes of Germany, more especially of Goethe and Schiller. He wrote a stirring poem on the anniversary of Schiller's death, entitled *Heros bleib bei uns*. He was also a fierce opponent of the prevailing mania for restoring the historical castles, and in a widely circulated pamphlet had attacked the Grand Duke of Baden for his share in restoring, and, as he contended, spoiling, the magnificent ruins of the old castle of Heidelberg. It is worthy of note that, while the influence of distinguished personalities in the political arena has steadily declined, in the world of learning and literature men like Mommsen, Hermann Grimm, Gerhardt Hauptmann and others, are able to appeal to public opinion with a strong backing. Thus Wildenbruch could take it upon himself to address crowned heads almost on terms of equality—*de puissance à puissance*—as was done by the poet Björnson to the late King of Sweden, and by scholars in the days when Erasmus was proclaimed the greatest man of his age and made his triumphal progress from Strasburg to Basel amid the admiring acclamation of a whole people.

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In the summer of 1909 I came again to Thuringia on a visit to some old friends, when I received a letter from Princess Reuss asking me to pay her a visit at the *château* of Wilhelms-thal, where she was staying with her nephew the Grand Duke, or to meet her at the Wartburg. As I had with me my son, to whom I wanted to show the Wartburg, I chose the alternative. We met in the afternoon and were received with great courtesy by Captain von Cranach, a descendant of the great painter of that name, and commander of the castle. We were taken all over this wonderful relic of the Middle Ages, and, by special permission of the Grand Duke, inspected those parts which are rarely shown to visitors, including the apartments reserved for the reigning family in which the Princess had spent many of her young days. We dined in the quaint Romanesque hall, said to be the *Kemenata* of St. Elizabeth, which, together with other parts of the castle, known everywhere through Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, were artistically restored by the late Grand Duke Karl Alexander, the father of Princess Reuss.

It happened to be the 2nd of September, the *Sedantag*, so we had the advantage of seeing the castle lit up at night. The pathway through the forest is provided with electric lights, which Herr von Cranach caused to be kept alight for us on our way back to Eisenach late in the evening.



## CHAPTER XVIII

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A LIMITED set of men, and of women too, has always existed and is still to be found on the Continent who lead an inner life, unaffected by the current values of the crowd. Indeed, the very fact of their existence as a class is scarcely known to the general public; for, although united by sympathy of thought and ideas, these people are divided by nationality as well as by worldly station. Cash values or the lack of them count for little here. Thus it may come to pass that a man living in a garret, who is unknown to his next-door neighbour, let alone to the augurs of publicity in his own country, may be acclaimed as an equal among what Mommsen called "les intellectuels" all over Europe and the United States, and thus illustrate in his own person the difference between the appreciation of the few and that of the crowd, which is more and more becoming the only arbiter of fame, transitory though it be. Peasant's sons, Socialists, are to be met here where lords, spiritual and temporal, might seek admission in vain. Princes, and even monarchs, do not necessarily obtain recognition where Spinoza, Goethe, and a few minor gods are accorded supreme reverence.

I am referring to that intellectual *élite*, the few men and women in whom the best culture of an age is reflected as in a mirror, not to the mere compiler of books, the marvel of learning, the prodigy of omnivorous knowledge and reading, but the product of an aristocratic bent of heart and mind, born in the cottage more often than in the palace, and chastened, not coarsened, by contact with the world: individuals in whom the *megala psyche* of the Greeks has culminated in a

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harmonious conception of life, its dignity, its loftiest aims. Not the least interesting fact connected with the former Chancellor of the German Empire is that he can lay claim to belong to this exclusive set.

Before Prince Bülow came to Berlin, in 1896, as Foreign Secretary, he had served as a diplomatist in most of the great capitals of Europe. There he always sought out, by preference, the company of the intellectual few. Thus in Paris he associated with the philosopher Caro; the Russian poet, Turgéniev; the brilliant writers, Francis and Gabriel Charmes, Pallain, Gabriel Monod, the historian, and others. At St. Petersburg he came into contact with the poet Grigorovitch; and the widow of the poet, Alexei Tolstoi, Countess Alexandrine Tolstoi, a highly gifted personality. In Rome he met Bonghi, the historian de Cesare, and Count Pasolini; the great physicist Blaserna; Professor Boni, the eminent director of the excavations in the Forum; the mathematician, Brioschi; and, in early days, Mommsen, Gregorovius, and Malvida von Meysenbug, the authoress of the "Memoirs of an Idealist."

Prince Bülow comes of a very old and distinguished family whose records go back to the twelfth century, and which in the course of seven hundred years has produced a very large number of soldiers,<sup>1</sup> churchmen, diplomatists, statesmen, authors, and artists. Even within the last hundred years there are twelve entries to the credit of the Bülow family in Brockhaus' work of Universal Biography. The significance of this record will be best understood when it is borne in mind that many equally ancient noble families have not produced a single member whose life's work has been deemed important enough to warrant mention in Brockhaus: the mere fact of princely birth or exalted position in the service of the State, such as Ambassador or even Minister of the Crown by no means

<sup>1</sup> A General von Bülow won the battle of Grossbeeren, August 23, 1813 against Marshal Oudinot; the battle of Dennewitz, September 6, against Marshal Ney; and besides took a prominent part in the crowning victory of Waterloo.



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implies a biographical mention in this stupendous work of reference, compared with the cosmopolitan comprehensiveness of which the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is as an "orphan child"! It is interesting to note that Prince Bülow's mother, as also Bismarck and Moltke's mothers, did not belong by birth to the nobility.

A writer in the *Nineteenth Century* of December 1908, gives the following graphic picture of the Prince's personal appearance, which it would be difficult to improve upon :

"In personal appearance the Chancellor is a worthy representative of that Mecklenburg aristocracy the gallant bearing of whose members made such an impression on the great Napoleon that he said to his Marshals, 'I can make you into kings but not into Mecklenburg nobles.' Tall, with a stately carriage of the head, and shoulders which give him grace and distinction, he has the broad brow of intellect; and a mouth and chin (clean-shaven except for the soldierly moustache) which show courage, energy and decision. But it is the eyes which arrest attention—eyes beautiful and fearless, that meet you with a directness and sincerity, rare indeed in any class, but for a diplomatist almost unique. It is a face, steadfast, proud and self-reliant; yet with a sunny-tempered kindness and grace in it which win straight to the heart."<sup>1</sup>

The Prince's popularity with all classes of the community was due to that *urbanité de cœur* which is a product of true mental culture, the refinement of one of Nature's gentlemen. Again, as a Minister for Foreign Affairs he enjoyed in a high degree the confidence of the great majority of the German people—notably of the allied German Sovereigns, foremost among whom was that large-hearted man, the venerable Regent of Bavaria, and his noble son and heir, Prince Ludwig.

Prince Bülow's triumphant self-reliance, his sunny optimism, his natural *bonhomie*, added to an element of "sophrosyne," mark the well-balanced gentleman among surroundings in which

<sup>1</sup> *Prince Bülow, an Appreciation*, by Sidney Garfield Morris. *Nineteenth Century and After*, December 1908.

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these characteristics are not too plentiful. These qualities made friends for him among Liberals and even Socialists, in spite of his boast that he wished to be considered an agrarian Chancellor. When the Prince was suddenly taken ill in the Reichstag, Bebel happened to be speaking and was much concerned at the Prince's condition and its possible connection with political polemics. This tribute of sympathy from such a quarter was appreciated as only appreciation can come where the beat of a human heart is there to register it. Bülow invariably "scored" over the Socialists in debate by his humorous yet good-tempered readiness of retort. He proved also to be well advised when, in 1903, in the face of an unexpected increase of Socialist seats in the Reichstag, he opposed all attempts at nervous anti-Socialist legislation, and promised to make the "House" so comfortable "that all and every one should feel at home in it."

My acquaintance with Prince Bülow was a legacy I took over from the Bismarck family: for I feel sure that it was mainly due to my connection with the latter that Herr von Bülow, as he then was (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), welcomed me as he did during the Spanish-American War as representative of the *New York Herald*. Since that time I have never been to Berlin without paying him my respects, and being honoured in return by his delightful hospitality and that of Princess Bülow. Notably was this the case during the momentous period of the Algeciras Conference, when I again represented the same paper, and, with the Prince's assistance, drew up the interview in which the much-quoted phrase occurred that there should neither be *vainqueurs* nor *vaincus* in the discussion of the Moroccan question at Algeciras. During that period I was repeatedly a guest at the Reichskanzler Palais. One evening after dinner the Princess showed me over the Palace. This gave me the material for the following little sketch, which I contributed at the time to the *Schlesische Zeitung*:

"If I am guilty of a slight indiscretion, it is that it seems that the feeling of reverence for the great dead is a little out

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of fashion in high circles. Likewise it would appear that in those spheres people no longer possess the simplicity, the sincerity, of their forbears. Thus it comes to us as a revelation when we now and then meet with characteristics which were once exemplified in kings, and at all times were a mark of gentle breeding.

“Princess Bülow conducted me through the spacious apartments of the Reichskanzler Palace. We passed through the imposing *salon*, which has become historical, inasmuch as the Berlin Conference in 1878 held its sittings there, and entered the suite of rooms in which the Princess herself now reigns as one of the most charming of hostesses. They are filled with art treasures brought from her southern home: pictures, antique majolicas and bronzes, beautifully worked Venetian glass; everything ordered with consummate taste in its proper place. Queen Margherita of Italy, ‘La bella Regina,’ by Lenbach, is on the wall and next to it, limned by the same master-hand, the gifted step-daughter of Minghetti—the Princess herself. A very splendour of Italian taste and dignity strikes the eye. The further end of the drawing-room is arranged as a conservatory and filled with plants. There is the laurel, the gentle myrtle, not to forget the palm in all its graceful and majestic splendour. They complete the picture. An abundance of grace is blended here in the most beautiful harmony. I felt as if a breath of the glorious Italian Renaissance had been wafted up here into these chilly northern shores, for it was mid-winter.

“‘But come along with me,’ quoth my companion, interrupting my expressions of admiration. ‘You knew Prince Bismarck; let me show you the pieces of furniture which once belonged to him, which we treasure in his memory.’

“We entered a large room, bare of all ornament, except that a thoughtful portrait of Bismarck (again painted by Lenbach) looked down upon us from the wall. Two plain writing-tables stand side by side, such as were in use about fifty years ago, and take up nearly a whole side of the room. They are locked, and are to remain locked by order

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of the present appreciative tenant. Two little brass plates notify that they once belonged to Prince and Princess Bismarck.

“‘This was his first writing-table during the most anxious period of his life, the first half of the Sixties,’ said the Princess. ‘My husband had these plates fixed, for we both feel that it would be a desecration on our part to use what once belonged to that great man!’”

Both the Prince and Princess were partial to sociability on a small and intimate scale—lunches or dinners “im kleinen Kreis,” as the Germans term them. General conversation in which all should take part was the staple entertainment. I have often noticed the kindly consideration with which the Prince would endeavour to draw a guest out who might have felt reluctant to join in where the standard was naturally a high one. Music was tabooed as being an anti-social feature which might possibly not appeal to all. Thus although Princess Bülow is a devotee to music, and I have repeatedly been her guest when the Russian pianist Sapellnikow was also present, never a note was played as long as other guests were present.

In August of 1906 I paid a visit to Prince Bülow at Norderney, and in the same month of 1908 I went again to see him at the same place. On my arrival the Prince’s aide-de-camp, Captain von Schwarzkoppen, called at my hotel and brought me a kindly message from him. He hoped I would come to dinner at the villa, and if my son was with me, that I would bring him too: this is only one of the many kind attentions I have received at the Prince’s hands.

During my stay I had several talks with the Prince bearing on the relations between Germany and England, the gist of which was published in the *Standard* of September 14, 1908. At this distance of time it is unnecessary to reproduce that which was of purely temporary interest.

In his later years Prince Bismarck often made use of a saying to the effect that Europe would never, in the long run, tolerate the dominant hegemony, the dictatorship of any one



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single Power or person. The exact words employed by Prince Bismarck were in English: ". . . Only, no cock-of-the-walk business: Europe will not put up with it." Europe as an entity would resent as derogatory, if not as intolerable, a situation in which it might come to pass that an individual would arrogate to himself the attribute of being supreme arbiter of war and peace, the latter to depend upon his benevolent intentions periodically vouchsafed to the world as free gifts, to be received in an attitude of grateful humility.

The question might naturally suggest itself to Englishmen how the eventuality foreshadowed by Bismarck would be likely to affect England, in case such a truculent figure should appear on the European stage. The prospect seemed to justify a certain anxiety in face of a situation which might conceivably arise at any moment and place the peace of the world—and with it the security of an Empire embracing one-fifth of the inhabited globe—at the mercy of one Power, or even of a single individual! Nor could this uncertainty be considered to be entirely eliminated even were it frankly recognised that such a Power or personage was imbued with the very best intentions, and, above all, inspired by a genuine love of peace. For there are always accidents to be reckoned with, more particularly in the case of individuals.

The warning example of Louis XIV., of Napoleon I., and, to a lesser degree, of Napoleon III., were ever present to Bismarck's mind. It is true that he himself was at one time more or less the "cock of Europe," and he was fully conscious of the responsibilities and dangers of the position. But in his day France still figured before the world as a possible disturber of European peace, as the champion of a hotly desired "revanche," whereas Bismarck, even when some of his methods may have been unpalatable to European statesmen, invariably got credit for honestly desiring peace as sincerely as his old master, if only in order to keep what Germany had won at the price of terrible sacrifices; in other words, Bismarck's aims were openly avowed and known to foreign Governments to be peaceful and moderate, as graphically circumscribed by

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his own famous saying that to Germany the whole Eastern Question was not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier. Added to this there was the *prestige* of his unparalleled achievements. Hence many Englishmen who are anti-German to-day were sincere admirers of Bismarck and friendly in their sentiments towards Germany.

Since then much has changed. France no longer stands in the foreground as a likely disturber of peace; other elements of unrest have taken her place, concerning which, however, it would be inopportune to enter into details. It will be sufficient to say that much of the anti-German sentiment existing in England may be traced to a feeling of uncertainty as to the political aims of Germany. It would thus seem to be desirable to demonstrate to the world at large that the ingredients of unrest above referred to are not sympathised with by the German nation—in other words, that ambitious Pan-Germanic ideals form a negligible quantity, and, finally, that no single individual possesses the power to disturb the peace of the world; but the process of enlightenment should proceed without trespassing upon the legitimate sensibilities of the German people.

I made no secret of this connection of ideas in my intercourse with Prince Bülow, as I had reason to believe that they were held by a large number of Englishmen. My host was equally frank in his endeavour to remove all justification for uneasiness on this score. Without entering upon a direct rejoinder, he assured me that one of the greatest dangers of the present day is the exaggerated importance attached by the newspaper-reading public to casual utterances of highly placed personages without reference to the circumstances and conditions of mind under which they had been made. Altogether people are in the habit of talking in public and “at” the public far more than formerly. But very few such utterances are to be taken in the wide application often attributed to them when separated from their setting.

Prince Bülow's conversation in private life was often interspersed with interesting references to his great predecessor,

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and on this particular occasion, in pointing out the difference between words and deeds, he referred to Prince Bismarck as one of those rare men with whom it was unsafe to take lightly anything he said, even in moments of nervous irritation. "I happened to call on him in Berlin in the year 1874," he said; "it was in the midst of his quarrel with Count Arnim, who had been our Ambassador at Paris. Suddenly Bismarck burst out: 'If Arnim does not give up the documents (*Erlasse*) which he has in his possession, I shall land him in prison' ('*Ich bringe ihn noch ins Zuchthaus*,' a term conveying imprisonment, *à peine dure*, for felony)." On leaving the apartment with General von Schweinitz we talked this startling statement over, and attributed it to an ebullition of temper. For the idea of a full-blown Ambassador being imprisoned as a common malefactor was unheard of and could only be regarded as a joke. Yet within six months Arnim was arrested, criminal proceedings were taken against him, and he was ultimately sentenced *in contumaciam* to five years' imprisonment (*Zuchthaus*). Prince Bülow added that this was, of course, an extreme case, just as Bismarck was a very exceptional man in the doggedness with which he followed up a course he had once entered upon. But others, though less uncompromising than Bismarck, might still be found to be as good as their word by their political opponents.

That the mutual distrust existing between England and Germany should have apparently lost little of its intensity in his later years was a matter of deep concern to the Prince. Nor was this by any means the first occasion on which he had given expression to his sentiments on this subject. He considered the animosity between England and Germany as little short of a species of popular madness by whomsoever it was indulged, which, if persisted in, could only lead to endless mischief to both countries for the sole benefit of the *tertii gaudentes*. He expressed himself as most anxious to do all in his power to put an end to it, but his power was necessarily limited. With regard to English apprehension of German naval aggression, he thought that it would be more

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natural, and, therefore, more excusable, if the Germans were to fear being attacked.

"You have never known an invasion," he said, "since the time of William the Conqueror, and I can assure you, not for the first time, and not as German Chancellor, but as one gentleman to another, that nobody of any sense or influence in Germany dreams of picking a quarrel with England, much less of such an insane idea as invading England." An English illustrated paper, with drawings of supposed German spies gathered in an English country inn, lay on the table, and pointing to it, the Prince said that the stories of German spies in England, which had been recently circulated, had only a foundation in over-heated imagination. "But for us Germans," he continued, "there is far more tangible reason for apprehension, through our exposed geographical position, apart from our dark historical background.

"It is only a hundred years ago," said Prince Bülow, pointing to a map of Germany before him, "that this very spot on which we stand formed a part of a French department. The towns of Bremen, Lübeck, and Hamburg were '*nos bonnes villes de Bremen, Lubeck, et Hambourg*,' under the sway of the French Empire. Eleven young Prussian officers were tried by court-martial and shot at Wesel for defending their own country. In other words, our people have still a vivid historical consciousness of national disaster and disgrace against a recurrence of which our army is our only safeguard."

A German Chancellor's position is an arduous one at the best of times, even if his secondary functions as President of the Federal Council and Prussian Prime Minister be not taken into account. To see Prince Bülow sitting at his desk with a number of finely pointed pencils by his side, together with neat piles of plain white notepaper and envelopes of different sizes carefully arranged, side by side, on a small tabouret, but otherwise without a scrap or vestige of any papers, manuscripts or letters in the room, was to gain an impression of perfect order and self-control, and, finally, the conviction that only a man of the finest nerve balance, one who has successfully

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practised Horace's "*Compesce mentem*" through life, would be equal to the tasks which must come daily before him.

During my stay at Norderney I gained the impression that should other nations be bolder than Germany, and care to challenge the world's sense of right and wrong, then Germany would not shirk the ordeal, though with the certainty of her fleet being annihilated. Even such a catastrophe would not compare in magnitude with the disasters which Germany encountered in one single campaign against the first Napoleon, and against whom she ultimately rose in triumph, for, as Prince Bülow expressed himself: "Germany has invariably shown herself greater in misfortune than in prosperity." The loss of her fleet would not necessarily deprive her of the qualities which had enabled her to build it, and would still leave Germany materially more powerful than she has ever been in modern times.

French public opinion, Prince Bülow assured me, had credited Germany with warlike designs, which have since been shown to be baseless. More recently the opposite extreme impression had apparently prevailed in some places, namely, that the Germans, are, what the French term "Pacificists," or men who are "for peace at any price." This view, besides being an erroneous one, harbours certain dangers, in illustration of which the Chancellor related the following historical reminiscence: It is well known that, owing to the lack of resolution on the part of the Ministers of King Frederick William IV., this otherwise gifted monarch underwent a crucial humiliation at the hands of the insurgents in Berlin during the revolution of 1848. The mob brought the dead bodies of their comrades who had fallen at the barricades to the front of the palace, and obliged the King to do homage to them. Suffering acutely under the indignity thus put upon him, the King went to Potsdam a few days afterwards and gathered a number of the officers of the garrison around him. He was about to explain matters to them when they rattled the scabbards of their swords on the floor so persistently that his voice could not be heard. This fresh outrage so affected

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the King that he burst into tears. It is even said that the mental malady to which he ultimately succumbed first took an aggravated form from this occasion.

Prince Bülow gave me to understand that this case afforded an apt illustration of the great responsibilities attached to the position of a monarch, which he could not divest himself of. Whatever his personal inclinations might be he could never afford to have his dignity compromised, even by internal, let alone external, influences; especially when the latter might affect the honour of the nation before the whole world.

The Prince remarked that, somehow or other, people seem to think they can do things in Germany which would be strongly resented if circumstances were analogous in other countries. The Chancellor here referred to an article in the *Contemporary Review* for July 1908, which had also simultaneously appeared in a Paris review, written by the Polish parliamentarian, Herr von Koscielski. The Prince characterised it as monstrous that a member of the Prussian Upper House of the German Reichstag should take upon himself to ventilate, in a foreign periodical, his grievances against a Government of his own country, and this in a mischievous spirit of misrepresentation which had been shown up over and over again. He said that it would be impossible to imagine an English or French Party leader doing such a thing. But German internal affairs were thought to be fair game—the common property of outsiders, to discuss and comment upon, and otherwise deal with at their own sweet will.

Germany only desired to be left alone to work out her salvation by attending to her own affairs, though there is naturally a line beyond which she could not go, namely, to accept national humiliation. If there be any danger ahead it could not be said to arise from Germany's desire to break the peace, but from a belief that a preconceived intention existed to coerce and injure her. The idea of making the German Government responsible for German newspaper criticisms of foreign countries—as if the German Press was controlled from Berlin

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—is ridiculous, and has been proved to be so times without number. Hardly anywhere is there less centralisation or control in the matter of newspapers than in Germany. This is plainly made evident by the constant Press attacks on the Government, which do not even stop short of attacking German Sovereigns.

Touching upon the results which might be expected from the meeting in 1908 between King Edward and the Emperor of Russia at Reval, the Chancellor did not think that anything startling need be looked for. The Russians have enough to do with their own affairs. During the recent visit of President Fallières to Russia it is said that forty political executions took place. An instructive source of information, with regard to Russian affairs, is still to be found in the reports sent by the late General von Schweinitz during his stay as German Ambassador at St. Petersburg from 1876 to 1892. They furnish even to-day, after so many years, a key to much that has already taken place, and is still likely to take place in Russia. This clear-sighted observer pointed out how every Russian war, without exception, had been followed by an internal upheaval of some kind or other—thus, that of the Dekabrist after the great Napoleonic wars. The liberation of the serfs followed upon the war in the Crimea, and the Nihilist movement came on the top of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. General von Schweinitz was convinced that the Emperor Alexander III. would wage no war; and so, indeed, it turned out.

In connection with Russian diplomacy in Turkey, Prince Bülow related a characteristic trait of Count Ignatieff, when he was Russian Ambassador at Constantinople. Instead of paying his court to the officials in power, as most diplomatists would be inclined to do, the clever Russian made it a rule to call, in a most effusive manner, on every Minister who had just fallen into disgrace. Ignatieff openly told his friends that he had two distinct motives in view in acting thus: that men who had been dismissed from power are likely to be more communicative than those in office, and thus prone to let out

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valuable information which they would otherwise keep to themselves. Besides, there could be no knowing how soon they might be reinstated in office; in which case, they would naturally be well disposed towards an ambassador who had shown them such marked consideration when in disgrace.

I enjoyed Prince Bülow's hospitality for the last time at the Reichskanzler Palais, in Berlin, in January 1909. The idea of his retirement might perhaps already then have occupied his mind, for his last words to me in parting were: "Come and see me in Roma Eterna, where the palm-tree which Goethe planted<sup>1</sup> is still to be seen from our windows." There, since he has retired from office, Prince Bülow spends the winter months, in the beautiful Villa Malta, one of the finest Roman palaces. He passes the summer and autumn as he used to do at Norderney and in the neighbourhood of Hamburg where he owns an estate. He takes no further part in politics; but I see a time coming when the Germans will not willingly allow their eminent men, those who have devoted the best years of their life to the service of the State, to recede into sterile inactivity. Their presence will be demanded in the Privy Council Chamber, if not in the Senate, to take their share in the business of their country—the national welfare.

One of the last letters I received from the Prince, only a few months ago, contained the following characteristic passage: "I write to you in German, as you have a better command of that language than I of the tongue in which Byron wrote. This reminds me that the 4th Canto of 'Childe Harold' contains the deepest and most brilliant definition of the *Alma Urbis* that has ever been written."

<sup>1</sup> Goethe planted this palm-tree in the garden of the Villa Malta in the year 1788, in close proximity to which many years afterwards King Ludwig I. of Bavaria, the patron of literature and arts, planted another, which is also still thriving.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE WILHELMSTRASSE

My acquaintance with the Wilhelmstrasse—the term has come to mean the Government offices in that spacious thoroughfare—dates from the winter of 1890-91, since when I used to look in occasionally to see the late Under Secretary of State, Dr. Franz von Rottenburg.<sup>1</sup> It was there that I first gained a casual insight into the immense amount of hard work expected of the higher Prussian State officials. Rottenburg was very busy then with the tariff and customs negotiations of Germany and the United States—a never-ending source of friction between the two countries down to the present day, and he complained of the arduous task involved in dealing with the astute Yankees. Rottenburg had lived in England for several years, and we used to adjourn to the Kaiserhof for lunch and talk over what were to him old times and pleasant recollections. It was on one of these occasions that the late Herr Krupp came up to our table and finally invited us both to dinner. I had unfortunately already accepted another invitation for the same evening, and was obliged to decline, thus missing my only opportunity of following up an acquaintance with the richest man in Germany; what the Germans call “Ein schwer reicher Mann,” implying a burden with its attendant weight and anxiety.

Prince Bismarck had not yet been out of office a year, and his retirement and everything connected with it formed a leading topic of conversation in Berlin society; particularly so

<sup>1</sup> Herr von Rottenburg was subsequently appointed Curator of the University of Bonn, with the honorary prefix of “Excellency,” a post which he held until his death in 1907.

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with Herr von Rottenburg, who had been one of the Prince's right-hand men. Bismarck was supposed to have been the architect of his fortunes, and, as rumour said, had expected Rottenburg to follow him into retirement. This, however, Rottenburg had failed to do, great pressure having been brought to bear to convince him that it was his patriotic duty to remain at his post and give Bismarck's successor the benefit of his great experience of Chancellerie work, for Rottenburg had been what is termed "Vortragender Rath"<sup>1</sup> in the Imperial Chancellerie under Bismarck. This difficulty in his position seemed to cause Rottenburg a deal of worry, and even sleepless nights, as he confided to me. Some time afterwards, when I came to be on intimate terms with Prince Bismarck and his family, Rottenburg asked me on several occasions whether Prince Bismarck ever mentioned him; in case he should do so, I might explain to him the mental difficulty in which he had been placed. In July 1892, I was walking with Bismarck through a wood near Kissingen when I told the Prince of Rottenburg's distress, and, mindful of the saying that a spoonful of oil is often of more benefit to us than a quart of vinegar, I asked him to authorise me to transmit a few kind words to Rottenburg. Bismarck, perhaps moved by the warmth of my intercession, smiled in that peculiar way of his when about to say something pointed, and replied by a well-known quotation from the *Freischütz*, "*Schwach bin ich, doch kein Bösewicht*,"<sup>2</sup> implying that it had been weakness, not wickedness, which had caused Rottenburg, as the Prince thought, to desert him and to remain at his post, instead of following his chief into retirement. Of course, I did not repeat this to Rottenburg, but when he questioned me again I told him that Bismarck had spoken kindly of him. This I could the more readily reconcile with my conscience as the imputation of weakness was, after all, a venial one as compared with that of ingratitude, which Bismarck was reported to have hurled at Rottenburg.

<sup>1</sup> Privy Councillor, privileged to confer directly with the Minister of State.

<sup>2</sup> I am weak, but not a villain.

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Herr von Rottenburg, whose first wife was an English lady, subsequently married the daughter of Mr. Phelps, United States Ambassador at Berlin, and took a flat in the Dorotheenstrasse, where I was his guest on several occasions.

Like many, if not most, Prussian high officials, Rottenburg was a man of wide intellectual culture, not merely a linguist (for among cultivated Germans the knowledge of half a dozen languages—Greek, Latin, French, Italian, English, and possibly Spanish—is not at all rare, and would only mean the possession of the raw materials, the tools for the cultivation of the mind), but endowed with great philosophical as well as literary accomplishments. In this respect Rottenburg probably stood above the average. More especially was he at home in the domain of the “*Staatswissenschaften*” (political sciences), implying a thorough knowledge of history, political economy, and international law, on which subjects he might well have been on a par with his more famous colleague, Lothar Bucher. I still possess a copy of his work, *Der Begriff des Staates*, with an autograph dedication, a work revealing an intimate knowledge of the philosophy of history. Socialism was another subject on which he was an authority. He made a deep study of Karl Marx’s epoch-making book, *Das Kapital*, and was fond of expatiating on what he considered to be its logical fallacies (notably Marx’s omission to give rightful prominence to intellect and the genius for organisation as wealth-producers in addition to mere human labour).

Association with the ornamental side of diplomatic life and high society was not without a certain attraction for Rottenburg, for I possess a portrait of him in Court dress with *escarpins* revealing a shapely leg. But acquaintance with the strong power of the State, represented by monarchs, chancellors, and armed hosts, had not dulled his appreciation of the value of ideas as the ultimately dominant force in the political world. He understood the meaning of the progress of Socialism in Germany. Twenty years ago, when many were still of opinion that it was a surface movement of a transitory character

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which a young Sovereign in a hurry might be safely left to deal with and conciliate, Socialism caused Rottenburg, in conjunction with the growing political power of the Roman Catholic Centre party, grave concern for the future of Germany. Hard work had evidently had its effect on his nervous system, for, in spite of his robust, even martial appearance, which many others also acquired by continual association with Bismarck, he died before his time, and thus may well be enrolled among those assistants of the Prince whose vitality was used up in the employ of the giant, and who sacrificed their lives in the service of their country in the same way as those who had fallen in the fight on the battlefield, true to Bismarck's own motto : "*Serviendo consumor.*"

Rottenburg had been on good terms with the Bismarck household for many years and was often present when, in the evening, the Chancellor received friends in his unceremonious homely fashion. Among the stories he told me was one of a good-looking, clean-shaven personage who was among the guests on a certain occasion. He apparently did not speak German, and his French had a peculiar accent. Some of those present, in rollicking spirit, were half inclined to make fun of him ; when, in the course of conversation, the stranger, to their great surprise, blurted out the words : "*Quand j'étais Ministre des Affaires Etrangères !*" They pricked up their ears at this, and, wondering who it could be, quickly drew in their horns when they learnt that it was no other than Lord Rosebery !

It was impossible to have any dealings with the Wilhelmstrasse without hearing stories of the occult influence of Herr von Holstein, the mysterious Privy Councillor who turned against Count Harry Arnim forty years ago, an action which ultimately led to the latter's conviction and condemnation as a common malefactor. Few had ever seen this elusive personage ; even his Sovereign was said to have scarcely ever set eyes on him. In private life he visited only one family, and that one was of little consequence. Yet he was supposed to move ambassadors, ministers, and minor officials about at his will ;

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even to have had a hand in the fall of Bismarck, Caprivi, and Hohenlohe. He was apparently content to wield real power in the dark, unknown to the public, recognition and applause from whom, like other strong men, he disdained. And yet, strange to say, he was childishly nervous about his name appearing in the papers, in which, as a fact, it was rarely to be seen until within a few weeks of his retirement.

Even allowing for Herr von Holstein's distinguished record of services, it would still seem at first sight to be a natural query how a man without direct Ministerial responsibility, and living under such retiring conditions, could have possessed the influence he was accredited with. Indeed, it can only be explained by taking into account the atmosphere of distrust and intrigue which has been so often connected with higher Prussian political, and more particularly diplomatic, appointments. It would be inconceivable under conditions of a *bonâ fide* Representative Government where a Ministerial Cabinet, as is the case in England, is loyally solidaric, and thus, as a rule, proof against irresponsible outside influence. This solidarity has never existed in Prussia. Hence the constant fear of intrigue and those compromising indiscretions in high places of which Prince Hohenlohe's Reminiscences were a crowning instance. Witness his pitiful complaints of the precarious nature of his own position. In this volume Herr von Holstein is also repeatedly mentioned. Under such conditions there would inevitably be many opportunities for influencing appointments and even the trend of affairs of the State open to a man of the abilities and intriguing disposition of Herr von Holstein. He had served on the diplomatic staff in St. Petersburg, Washington, Paris and elsewhere. It was believed by many that when he was ultimately transferred to the Foreign Office he was in the habit of inviting and receiving confidential reports from members of the different embassies behind the backs of the respective ambassadors—a system of *espionnage* which made the position of these dignitaries anything but a bed of roses, and tends to explain certain incidents in German diplomacy of recent times. The control of this network of secret information, added to

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his position as Chief of the Political Department of the Foreign Office, with the privilege of immediate perusal of all ambassadorial reports, endowed Herr von Holstein with great potentialities for making his influence felt. Besides, a Minister of Foreign Affairs could scarcely fail to attach great importance to the opinion of one with Holstein's long official experience under Bismarck. Thus it is not surprising to hear that, while certain ambassadors felt themselves secure in his good graces, others were in constant fear of incurring his enmity.

It was whispered that at last he had met his match in Prince Bülow; but, as a matter of fact, Holstein was got rid of by a stratagem during the time Prince Bülow was laid up after his attack of illness in the Reichstag, in April 1906.

I instinctively shrank from intruding upon such a man, and when I met him in the flesh it was due to Count Seckendorff, who told me that Herr von Holstein had read several of my contributions to the *New York Herald* during the Algeciras Conference, and would like to make my acquaintance if I cared to call upon him.

I accordingly did call one morning, and met with a very friendly reception. Assuming that I was familiar with the political history of Europe during the last twenty years, he entered into a broad discussion of the relations between England and Germany, the unsatisfactory nature of which he, in common with every distinguished German I have ever met, deeply deplored. More particularly had the persistent Germanophobe attitude of the *Times* pre-occupied him. He asked me if I believed that the *Times* was bent on war with Germany, and if I could explain the attitude of that paper. He declared that he could find nothing in the aims of Germany to justify it. Here, I may mention in parenthesis that, as far as I have been able to judge, German statesmen pay more attention to newspaper opinion, inland and foreign, than either their French or English colleagues. Herr von Holstein said he had been on good terms with Sir V. Chirol, when he represented the *Times* in Berlin, and had taken a liking to him as a well-informed

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sympathetic personage, who, however, had told him that he did not feel comfortable in Berlin and wanted to be out of it. This Holstein could not understand, since, as far as he knew, the correspondents of English papers met with a far more cordial treatment in political and social circles in Berlin than did German correspondents in London. In the course of our conversation Herr von Holstein touched upon Morocco and the Algeiras Conference, and strengthened the impression, which I had already gained from other sources, that he had been in favour of a more forward policy, in the belief that, if such had been pursued, France would ultimately have given way.

Before we parted he gave me a piece of exclusive news, which I telegraphed the same day to the *Herald*. It turned out to be inaccurate, but I am sure he gave it to me in good faith, with the honest motive of doing me a good turn as the representative of that journal, for he read the substance of it in my presence from a telegram which had just come to hand from the German representative in Egypt.

The impression I gained from my first interview with him and several subsequent visits which he encouraged me to pay him was that his views, at least as regards English affairs, were based on a conception of things as they were thirty years ago, and did not apply to the political situation of the present day.

My relations with Herr von Holstein, much to my regret, came to an abrupt termination; for when the long-standing rumours of his retirement into private life were officially confirmed I sent a telegram to the *Herald*, as in duty bound, reproducing what I had heard on good authority as to the nature of his far-reaching influence, whilst at the same time I gave due publicity to his great services, his strong character, and solid attainments. The passage relating to his occult influence gave him great offence, for he wrote me a rude letter, accusing me of ignorance and malevolence, which only supplied me with confirmatory evidence of the extraordinary sensitiveness of German politicians to Press comment.

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Herr von Holstein was said to be more or less the victim of persecution mania, the result, I should say, of his peculiarly lonely life and his constant brooding over political problems amidst a sea of intrigue: a form of mental affliction which was peculiar to Foreign Office officials in his time, living as they did in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion. In moments of irritation the old man would get excited, and mutter his determination to drag his enemies, mostly imaginary ones, before the muzzle of a pistol!

That a man in such a responsible position, who down to the last constantly emphasised his cordial relations with his official chief, and who on his retirement was awarded a signal mark of the favour of his Sovereign (the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle with brilliants), should no sooner have left office than he joined hands with one of the most relentless journalistic critics of both, shows the high estimate he had formed of the power of the journalistic pen, but did not throw a very favourable light on those traditions of loyalty to the Sovereign and to their own profession which have hitherto been the justified boast of Prussian bureaucrats.

The following peculiar incident, indicative of the subterranean working of intrigue in high places, came to my knowledge some time afterwards from an absolutely reliable source. According to this story Herr von Holstein already nursed the idea of Bismarck's compulsory retirement from office during the lifetime of the Emperor William I., namely, in the winter of 1887-8.

A gentleman in a high position, and known to be on excellent terms with the old Emperor, happening to be on a visit in Berlin, was quite unexpectedly asked to lunch at Borchardt's restaurant by Herr von Holstein. This in itself was an extraordinary occurrence, inasmuch as it was common knowledge that Herr von Holstein led a solitary life and had hardly ever been known to ask guests to his table. In the course of the lunch he spoke deliberately of Prince Bismarck having become too old for the heavy responsibilities of his office, that he was losing his memory and mixed up everything

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(" *er embrouillirte Alles*"), and that it was time for the good of the Empire that he should be removed from power. The gentleman to whom he made these confidences, though much astonished, did not attach direct importance to them at the time. It was only afterwards, when Prince Bismarck had been dismissed, that he realised their full portent.

It is well known that Prince Bismarck harboured a feeling of resentment towards Holstein down to the day of his death, a sentiment which the above incident of itself might tend to explain. The only reference to Herr von Holstein that I recall as emanating from the Bismarck family was a remark which Count Herbert made to me on several occasions—that Herr von Holstein, despite his intellectual acuteness, did not possess the faculty of clear thinking and straight dealing, and consequently rarely succeeded in carrying matters to a satisfactory conclusion.

So much has been written in unfair depreciation of the officials of the Wilhelmstrasse that it is no more than a feeling of bare justice which impels me to say a few words in defence of those who are rarely in a position to defend themselves.

I have had the privilege of meeting Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter only once—at Prince Bülow's table; but if anything could have inspired a feeling of sympathy for him it was the spirited manner in which he recently defended the officials of the Wilhelmstrasse against attacks levelled against them in the Reichstag; proving that in his person at least loyalty to colleagues and subordinates is not a dead tradition. In this instance it was loyalty to men, many of whom sacrifice health and grow prematurely old in the poorly requited service of their country.

From the journalistic point of view I can speak with some experience when I say that in no Government offices in any other country I am acquainted with do foreign journalists meet with the courtesy which I have invariably seen them receive in the Wilhelmstrasse, from the sturdy hall-porter with the Iron Cross of 1870 on his breast, throughout the

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different grades of "*decernents*" and Privy Councillors up to the august "Excellency" himself: and this whether the visitor represents a journal friendly or otherwise to German interests. In the same spirit of impartiality every properly accredited foreign journalist has his reserved seat in the Press gallery of the Reichstag—a privilege which, as far as my knowledge goes, is not extended to any foreign journalist in the House of Commons.

I am not in a position to offer an opinion on the qualifications of the rank and file employed in the Government offices of the Wilhelmstrasse; but I can say this much, that I have often been surprised at the intellectual attainments of those gentlemen with whom from time to time I have come into contact. Some of them have come from modest conditions in out-of-the-way provinces, yet, thanks to the opportunities offered to the energetic by the unrivalled Prussian schools existing throughout the country, even in the remote townlets on the Prussian frontier, they have risen to the honoured grade of *Geheimrath* in the Foreign Office or in the Ministry of the Interior: this is a rise almost impossible in oligarchic England, in spite of such an exceptional career as that of Mr. John Burns. A stroll through the long corridors of these buildings, with their endless rows of bookcases, containing every imaginary publication dealing with historical, political and economic matter; noting the scrupulous care, the tidiness, the systematic order which prevails everywhere—this alone would be sufficient to force the conviction upon the visitor that only a high type of official could supervise and deal efficiently with this vast mass of material. A number of specially trained men form part of the Ministerial and Imperial central offices. Some of them have passed the stiff examinations of *doctor juris* and possess high academical attainments. The work of these officials is often of a kind which could only be done efficiently by first-rate men. They have to draw up complicated reports and elaborate them, and thus to relieve the *Vortragende Raethe* (those privileged to report directly to the Minister of State) of some of their more

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arduous labours. They must be authorities on legislation and on history, and be familiar with political economy and the current literature on these subjects. Others, besides their regular routine work, undertake the editorship of various official publications. One gentleman I am acquainted with is not only expected to be an expert in such work, but also to be able to supply translations from eight different languages. Thus it will be readily believed that there are no sinecures in the Wilhelmstrasse.

The gathering, perusing, and classifying of the Press of the whole world is another special work of these officials which, as far as I can judge, is nowhere carried out so exhaustively as here. There is no such thing as ignoring a section of public opinion because it may happen to be directed against the Government; everything is grist that comes to this huge intellectual mill. Thus, whereas the Sunday newspapers of the English working classes are not taken in at any of the West-end clubs in London, much less read in our aristocratic Government offices, the fiery diatribes of the great Socialistic organ, the *Vorwärts*, are carefully read and noted down in the Wilhelmstrasse, together with the last leading article of the London *Times*. The prevailing currents of public opinion are here subjected to the most searching analysis by men who, in addition to their other qualifications, often possess a thorough knowledge of several foreign languages. Nowhere has the growth of Socialism throughout the world—in Asia as far as the mountain fastnesses of the Caucasus (Tiflis)—been more carefully followed than among the studious rank and file of the Wilhelmstrasse. Nowhere are to be found more cool-headed critics of the powers that be, and more fervent well-wishers for a better time to come for workers, whether by means of individual Liberalism or collective Socialism, than among these honourable and highly cultured men, of whom I am proud to number a few as my friends.

## CHAPTER XX

### SOME SOCIALIST LEADERS

It may tend to illustrate the sharp cleavage of social life in Germany, at least as far as the Socialists are concerned, when I say that I had mixed with Germans of nearly every class for over twenty years, and yet do not remember to have met a single Socialist. On one occasion in the eighties a working man lectured on Socialism at Arnstadt (Thuringia), and was looked upon by the friend with whom I was staying, a wealthy manufacturer, and others I came into contact with, as next door to a criminal. An Englishman living in Dresden about the same time, a teacher of the English language, was the first person to draw my attention to the reality of the Socialist Party. He was indignant at what he termed the brutal treatment meted out to Socialists for what, in the eyes of Englishmen, was merely the exercise of the right inherent in every citizen of free thought and free speech. Thus, when I was in Berlin in the winter of 1890-1, and the late Mr. Bashford, the Berlin correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, volunteered to give me a letter of introduction to the great Socialist leader, Herr Bebel, I gladly availed myself of the opportunity, and called one morning on him at his dwelling in one of the suburbs of Berlin, where he lived in a small flat under conditions such as one might expect to find among the working classes. He received me with scant courtesy in the presence of an elderly lady, whose relationship he did not disclose, but who I presume was his wife. That she was there at all was, I daresay, due to Bebel's wish to have a witness at hand when receiving a person unknown to him; for under existing circumstances at that time it would

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have been natural for him to have harboured some suspicion towards any stranger. This feeling on his part might well have been augmented by my awkwardness, for in those days I had little or no experience in meeting political personages. Consequently I hardly knew what to say to the Socialist leader. I had a feeling of embarrassment which strikes me as absurd to day, that whereas I was in the presence of the foremost leader of the greatest political movement of the age, I felt I was addressing a man who was almost an outlaw. It was only some years after that that it gradually dawned on me that Socialism was a *Weltanschauung* like any other, and as such a product of the times, and that, like all great intellectual movements born of the spirit of an age, it must ultimately contribute to the progress of the world.

Thus, instead of utilising the rare opportunity afforded me of having an interesting and profitable conversation, I only remember having asked Bebel one question, viz., how it came about that his party should be continually upholding the conditions of the English working classes as being so much superior to those in Germany. I had observed in the course of a wide intimacy with the German working classes that their possibilities of education were superior to those in England, as were also those of the small man becoming a freeholder; that English indirect taxation, although in theory freeing the working man from contributing to the maintenance of the State by the heavy duty put on tobacco and alcohol, made him in practice a greater taxpayer than any other member of the community; lastly, that the Germans possessed universal suffrage, which did not exist in England. Bebel replied that it was not the Socialists but the German Liberals who were always extolling English conditions, and that the Socialists were well aware of the inferior *status* in certain respects of the English working classes. The bane of the German conditions, he contended, consisted mainly in the lack of political freedom of the German masses, in spite of universal suffrage. Bebel made the impression on me of a man of remarkable energy and determination of character—more a man of action, I

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should have said, than a profound thinker; one who, under the exciting influence of enthusiasm, might be nerved up to anything, as indeed his record shows him to have been. To endeavour to intimidate such a man by coercion seemed to me even then as a hopeless course. Bebel reminded me somewhat, by his manner and cast of features, of a type I was familiar with in Saxony, where the mass of the people are largely of Slavonic stock, having something also of the Celt, with some affinity to the type of Keir Hardie. Altogether I had little conception of the greatness of one whose career has revealed the born leader of men, gifted with extraordinary political acumen, sagacity, and insight, doubly rare in unpolitical Germany; one whose political agitation has already been the means of bettering the lot of the German working man and the common soldiers and raising the position of the German woman. Bebel from the very beginning condemned the *Kulturkampf*, and foretold in 1872 that it would result in doubling the number of Ultramontane seats in the Reichstag and would finally contribute to Bismarck's fall. The fulfilment of the former prophecy is a matter of history. Of late years Bebel's principal task has been to reconcile the differences which have arisen within the ranks of the Socialists themselves, and to thwart the endeavours of their enemies to saddle the party with anti-patriotic aims. In this he has shown exceptional sagacity and astuteness. The task of making propaganda for his party has become a negligible one, inasmuch as its opponents have done this work for it. By one of those extraordinary strokes of luck which now and then fall to the lot of young Ideas—as they do, according to Napoleon, to young men—the Socialists have found a powerful auxiliary in the German Emperor, some of whose speeches, according to Bebel himself, have brought the Socialists a hundred thousand proselytes!

There are personages high up in public life who reflect the surface ephemera of their day, and, as such, appeal to the crowd—the flotsam and jetsam—ever living exemplification of *Populus vult decipi; decipiatur*. Their career is one long

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holiday—an intoxicating orgy of ecstasy, a delirium of delight—with a possible rude awakening at its close: the memory of it to be briefly catalogued hereafter with the chimera of a period.

There are others who stand for some epoch-making movement, fraught with vast possibilities for human weal or woe. They only obtain recognition and acceptance gradually; their lives being one long uphill fight of toil and trouble. Rarely do they live to witness the outcome of their labours, though now and then they may reckon on a certain meed of posthumous fame. Some few may verify in themselves Goethe's proud prediction:

"Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen  
Nicht in Aeonen untergehen." <sup>1</sup>

Such are the great thinkers, the makers of nations, the regenerators of society, who mark the milestones of progression along the thorny ascent of mankind. Many Socialists believe that the Leipsic master-joiner, August Bebel,<sup>2</sup> will hereafter be adjudged one of these.

On Bebel's seventieth birthday his seat in the Reichstag was decorated by floral tributes, contributed, I was told, by members of all political parties—a ray of human sunlight in an otherwise dark picture of party passion.

I made Paul Singer's acquaintance in the Reichstag on the day Prince Bülow was suddenly taken ill, in April 1906. A colleague introduced me to him in the vestibule. Singer's appearance was that of a portly, well-to-do man, with very little about him to lead one to suppose that he was a great party leader who enjoyed wide popularity. In the course of conversation, carried on while walking up and down, we passed two easels, placed side by side, on each of which rested a photogravure in a cheap oak frame. One of them, a coloured print, such as appears in any Christmas Number,

<sup>1</sup> "The trace of my days on earth shall not vanish in æons of time."

<sup>2</sup> A German poet of the name Bebel, the son of a poor peasant, lived in the fifteenth century. He studied at the Universities of Cracow and Basel and was crowned poet-laureate by the Emperor Maximilian in 1501.

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was the bust-portrait of the Emperor and Empress to be seen in every Berlin shop-window. It was published in honour of their recently celebrated silver wedding, an event which, like every other affecting the Imperial family, was passed over in silence by the chief Socialist organ, the *Vorwärts!* The other was a conventional monochrome figure-group of the Imperial family (also familiar in shop-windows), with a dog in the foreground. These, then, were the two costly "works of art" which the Emperor had been bestowing on exalted personages, and of which glowing descriptions had appeared in the dutiful organs of the Berlin Press! They had apparently been specially placed in the Reichstag by order of His Majesty for the admiration of its loyal and trusty members, inasmuch as they both bore the bold signature, "Wilhelm I.R."

When Singer recently died it was computed that over half a million people attended the funeral. The Berlin police delegated the task of keeping order to the Socialists themselves, and everything went off smoothly. To convey an idea of the meaning of this decision on the part of the Berlin authorities, we must picture to ourselves the London police resigning their functions over a whole district of London into the hands of the English democracy on the occasion of the funeral of such a leader as Mr. Keir Hardie. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, commenting on the vast Socialistic concourse on this occasion, remarked: "That which is behind these demonstrations cannot be shot down by rifle bullets." Amid a sea of slander, one item of reproach levelled against Singer was that of being a rich man, as he was known to be a large employer of labour. When he died it transpired that all he was possessed of was £2000; everything else he had given away during his lifetime!

In the spring of 1909 I had occasion to exchange letters with Georg von Vollmar, the well-known South German Socialist leader and member of the Reichstag, in consequence of which I paid him a visit, in the month of August, at his country seat at Soiensass, on the banks of the Walchensee, in the Bavarian Highlands. I started from Munich in the

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morning, and found the journey to be one of the most picturesque sequences of idyllic mountain scenery I have ever passed through. A tall, distinguished-looking man, with a moustache and an Imperial beard, such as they wear in Bavaria, came towards us leaning on a stick as we entered the veranda of his Schweizer-haus villa and bade me and my son a kindly welcome.

Herr von Vollmar's ill-health has of late years kept him somewhat in the background of political life, but there was a time in which his influence and popularity were so great that he was termed the "uncrowned King of Bavaria." Like many other Socialist leaders Herr von Vollmar has "qualified" for his commanding position by undergoing various terms of imprisonment. His record is an exceptional one among Socialists, inasmuch as he comes of a noble family and was educated in a Benedictine monastery. He served in the Bavarian army as an officer in the war of 1866 against Prussia, when he was only eighteen years of age. Subsequently he passed a year as a volunteer in the Papal army in Rome. At the outbreak of the war of 1870 he again entered the Bavarian army, this time in the telegraph service, and, though a non-combatant, was so severely wounded at Blois that he was permanently invalided.

The conversation I had with this eminent man made a deep impression on me, besides adding materially to my knowledge of the conditions of the Bavarian peasantry. Land tenure was a subject upon which he is an authority, since it had occupied him for many years as a member of the Bavarian Landtag. I had no idea of the essentially democratic character of the Bavarian laws, customs and traditions as they affect the tenure of land. For instance, the so-called *Grossgrundbesitz*, or big estates, in Bavaria amount to only one and a half per cent. of the total area of landed property, and this although property of five hundred acres is already included as a big estate. All this was a revelation to me, and what made it impressive was its being conveyed in the course of a pleasant conversation by a man whose whole life, bearing and appearance

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bore the aristocratic impress of fearless courage, veracity and sincerity.

We passed the day under Herr von Vollmar's hospitable roof, and were privileged to make the acquaintance of Frau von Vollmar, a Swedish lady of great charm, and obviously with wide intellectual interests and sympathies.

On my return through Munich I met Professor Lujo Brentano, who told me a story in connection with Herr von Vollmar which had been related to him some years previously, illustrative of the different position of Social Democracy in the South and in the North of Germany.

Prince Ludwig, the heir to the throne of Bavaria, owns a country seat on the banks of the Lake of Constance. The peasants in the neighbourhood wanted to draw their supply of salt for their cattle from the works of Stassfurt, in the Prussian province of Saxony, and applied to the Bavarian Minister, in whose department this matter lay, to grant them the reduction in the railway freight provided for the transport of agricultural produce. The Minister was of opinion that the peasants might just as well draw their supply from a Bavarian *saline*, and declined to accede to their request. When Prince Ludwig came shortly afterwards to the Lake of Constance the peasants sent a deputation to him, asking if he would support their petition and intercede on their behalf with the Minister of State. The Prince did so, but unsuccessfully. The following year, when he again visited the Lake, the peasants informed him that, after all, they had succeeded in obtaining a reduction in the railway charges. "How did you manage it?" queried the Prince. "Well," they answered, "we applied to Herr von Vollmar, and he has been successful." "You were quite right, and I am very glad you have been successful," is said to have been the Prince's answer.

Professor Brentano continued: "The relations towards Social Democracy of all classes of society, even including those belonging to Government circles, are quite different in Bavaria and throughout South Germany to what they are in Prussia.

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The late Minister of Finance, Baron von Riedel, once told me that the only man in the whole Landtag with whom it was worth while discussing a subject was the Deputy Herr von Vollmar. In Bavaria there is none of that social exclusiveness towards Social Democracy which prevails in the north. People mix with Socialists when they are gentlemen on a footing of perfect equality, in the same way as they do with men belonging to other parties—a thing quite unknown in Berlin. The Socialists are invited to co-operate in all social matters—as, for instance, in the Association for the Improvement of Dwellings; the consequence is that they do good work, and by their co-operation render valuable services to the cause of progress. By this means a great deal of the uncharitableness between the *bourgeois* classes in their relationship to Socialists is obviated, and the workmen of Bavaria, in spite of their Socialistic leanings, stand in human sympathy and relationship to the Prince Regent and his Heir precisely as they stand to those belonging to all other political parties.”

Thus Professor Brentano, one of the most distinguished of German living political economists and a strong champion of free trade.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SOME MEMORIES RECALLED

As will be evident from the preceding pages my various vocations have brought me from time to time into personal relations with a large number of distinguished Germans in different walks in life, a few of whom I briefly refer to here.

In the late Baron Ernst von Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, head of the eminent Berlin banking firm of that name, I possessed a kind friend at whose palatial residence in the Jaegerstrasse, as also at his beautiful country seat at Boernicke, was dispensed a princely hospitality. I met a number of notable people under his roof: the Marquis de Noailles, French Ambassador; Count von der Osten-Sacken, Russian Ambassador; Tewfik Pasha, Turkish Ambassador; the widow of Professor Helmholtz, and other personages. To meet and converse with a man like the Marquis de Noailles was to have brought home to one the serious loss it is to Continental civilisation that the sturdy Teuton has been so long cut off from contact with all that is cultured and best in French society;—the product of generations of distinction, physical as well as mental, on both sides: what Bismarck used to term the “Nursery,” which he admired as the hall-mark of English, French and Russian *noblesse oblige*, the well-balanced breeding which, on a basis of *bienveillance*, finds its embodiment in the term *Sophrosyne*—one of the things which intellectual education on black bread fails to produce. Scarcely less interesting than his distinguished visitors was the Herr Geheimrath himself, for, besides other claims to recognition, Herr von Mendelssohn was a privy councillor and a member of the Prussian House of Lords. Above all, he was a man of wide literary culture and

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refinement. Sometimes he would ask me to stay in the evening when the other guests had departed and adjourn to his study, where he would chat about things which absorbed him, but which might have possessed less interest for the *grand monde*. He took pleasure in showing me his literary treasures, among which was the original manuscript of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, entirely written in the great author's dainty hand-writing. Lessing was a contemporary and friend of the baron's own distinguished ancestor, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. The loss of his excellent wife—a tactful and charming hostess—was a great blow, from which I fear he never recovered. The truest and best valedictory testimony which I can bear to the memory of this cultured and amiable man is that I never remember to have heard an unkind or ungenerous word issue from his lips, although his cast of mind was of an uncompromising, eclectic kind.

I met the late Count Hatzfeldt, German Ambassador in London, in the autumn of 1894, at dinner at Lord Rosebery's, King Edward, then Prince of Wales, being present. In the course of conversation the Count related to me an incident *à propos* of Prince Bismarck. In the war of 1870 Count Hatzfeldt was on the staff of Bismarck's bureau officials. One day Bismarck received a letter from his wife, in which she energetically urged him to exterminate the French with fire and sword. He turned to Count Hatzfeldt and said: "My wife will yet bring me to such a pass that I shall really do the French a good turn!"

One of my last meetings with Count Herbert Bismarck was also at Lord Rosebery's house, in the month of May 1899, at a luncheon party. Mr. Cecil Rhodes was present, and he and Count Bismarck were the life and soul of the gathering. Referring to the supposed anti-English tendencies of his father, Count Bismarck said that Sir William Vernon Harcourt had frankly confessed to him that Germany had had it in her power to "upset the English apple-cart" in Egypt, but Prince Bismarck had done all in his power to smooth matters for England.

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Of other German diplomatists I have met abroad I recall Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein, until recently German Ambassador at Constantinople, where he dispensed extensive hospitality ; evidently believing that good dinners make good diplomacy. Like most Germans of his up-bringing, he is a very well-informed man, a hard worker, a musician who plays the piano with taste, and a good English scholar, his favourite reading being novels by the British authors in the Tauchnitz Edition. Adroit, without, I should say, possessing that finely adjusted balance of the nervous system which marks the born diplomatist, he has yet been a success in his ambassadorship at Constantinople, which was his first diplomatic post. For he started life as a lawyer, and for a time held the post of *Staatsanwalt*, or State attorney. A South German, endowed to the full with the shrewdness commonly attributed to that race, together with something of the hail-fellow-well-met good-nature for which the South German character is also noted, Herr von Marschall is an adept at playing upon that which Bismarck described as a mortgage on our understanding, our vanity, and is thus easily credited with unaffected simplicity by those who are more simple than he. Despite that, he is a kindly friend to those to whom he takes a liking, and, I am told, liked by those serving under him and others with whom he may come into contact in the course of his official routine. A keen judge of values, especially those of the intellect, the Press, and the democratic trend of our time in general, his judgment is not warped and handicapped by an exaggerated estimate of rank and position even of the most exalted kind. Thus equipped he has proved himself an adept in the practice of the so-called "New Diplomacy," which, whatever its drawbacks may be, has served his purpose hitherto remarkably well. While his predecessor at Constantinople used to reserve his confidences for the representative of one high-class German paper only, no journalistic or other fish were ever too insignificant to be worth gathering in Baron Marschall's net and being treated with the robust *bonhomie* of which he had

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made quite a specialty. Thus he did not, like other ambassadors, restrict his intercourse to diplomatic or fashionable society in Constantinople, but, when suitable occasions presented themselves, was not above attending artisan clubs, clinking glasses with their members, and listening to the part-songs which form such a marked feature of German middle-class social life. Above all, he was always ready to look after the interests of the humblest members of the German colony. The result has been a popularity such as probably no diplomatic representative in the Turkish capital possessed before him. Herr von Marschall also managed to get on wonderfully with the French Ambassador, though it may be doubted whether the Government of the Republic gained much by the friendship.

The last time I was at Constantinople, in 1908, an incident took place which tends to explain the popularity the German Ambassador enjoyed, even outside his current official activity as the representative of his country in Turkey. An Englishman of my acquaintance, who had come there on business, sought the assistance of the British Embassy in order to obtain some facilities which involved diplomatic action beyond the ordinary scope of consular assistance. His request was refused. Indeed, it was only in 1908 that the British Embassy for the first time deemed it worth while to send an official representative to attend a meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce in that city. The firm which Mr. D. represented happened to be one of an international character, established in Berlin as well as in London. After the refusal of the British Embassy to assist him, he applied to the German Ambassador, who promised his assistance and gave it with complete success.

During the last International Conference at The Hague, I met my old friend, Mr. Stead, one morning at the Temple station looking very glum. He had just returned from Holland, and was much perturbed by the trend of affairs at the Conference, where, he said, the English were being out-classed and put

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in the shade by the Germans. The British senior delegate had received the English journalists *in corpore* and snubbed them. Some of them, as Mr. Stead said, thought "no small beer" of themselves and were considerably huffed in consequence. On leaving Sir Edward Fry's presence they gave loud expression to their ill-humour; whereupon they were approached by a German journalist, who asked them why they did not call on the first German delegate, who, he felt sure, would be only too pleased to receive them. The idea of being received by a full-blown Ambassador after a snub from one who, in comparison, was "small fry" indeed, appealed to the knights of the pen. So they lost no time in taking the hint to call on Herr von Marschall, who had come from Constantinople to represent German interests at The Hague meeting. The result of their cordial reception and the dexterous treatment they experienced at his hands, flattering them to the top of their bent, led, as is well known, to a tremendous newspaper "boom" for the German delegate. In the course of his narrative, told in Mr. Stead's inimitable way, he forgot all about his patriotic misgivings, and laughed heartily over the successful pandering to human vanity.

I have been privileged to know three American Ambassadors in Berlin—Mr. Andrew D. White, Mr. Charlemagne Tower, and Dr. David Jayne Hill—who thus come within the scope of my German reminiscences. Mr. White is one of the most distinguished "intellectuals" of the United States. He was twice Ambassador at Berlin: the first time in 1879-81, and again from 1897 to 1902, since when he retired into private life. He is a sincere admirer of Germany, of the Emperor William I., of Bismarck, and more particularly of intellectual Germany, distinguished representatives of which he used to invite to his house. There I have met some of the leading professors of the University of Berlin. It goes without saying that it was considered a great honour to be invited to the house of this eminent man, whose record as a thinker is familiar to scholars of every country by his standard work, "A History

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of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom" (1896).

Mr. Charlemagne Tower came to see me at my hotel on my return from Moscow (January 1906), where I had been an eyewitness of the revolutionary movement in that city, and with regard to which he was curious to know what I had seen. I have heard it said that Mr. Charlemagne Tower recommended the introduction of a special Court uniform for American Ambassadors and their staff, which has since been adopted. Some may be of opinion that the garb worn by the Adamses, the Bancrofts, the Motleys, and, above all, by American Presidents, ought to be good enough for any Court, all the more so since it has hitherto—before the adoption of sundry decorative Continental values of to-day—been considered that the Anglo-Saxon type of the unadorned gentleman, from the time of Lord Castlereagh at the Vienna Congress onward, was second to none, indeed the most distinguished of any. But it is not given to everybody, not even to every American Ambassador, to rise to an exceptional occasion as did Beethoven, who, when somebody told him he had employed an unallowed harmonious progression, replied, “*I allow it.*”

I met Dr. David Jayne Hill the last time I was in Berlin, and regret that I was unable to defer my departure and accept an invitation he kindly gave me, for I have always looked upon it as one of the richer returns of intellectual work that now and then it brings us into touch with men of this stamp—men who have been chosen among hundreds of thousands by the supreme authority of their country as the fittest to do honour to their native land by representing it officially at foreign Courts. Great, therefore, was my surprise when I read in the Berlin correspondence of an English newspaper that Dr. Jayne Hill was not likely to “*feel himself at home*” in the atmosphere of the Court of Berlin. If a Berlin sheet written for lackeys and servant girls had made such a statement it would not have concerned me; but, as an Englishman, I was sorry to see a countryman of mine, presumably engaged to transmit important news from Berlin to his London employers, making such a statement.

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The question of the small salary attached to the post of an American Ambassador was also mentioned. This, however, was a matter which could only concern Americans. It came as a revelation to me that fifty years after a German Professor (Mohl) and his English wife had held court in Paris on the fourth floor of a house in the Rue du Bac, to which a King of Holland came, while Napoleon III. expressed regret that he had not been invited, it could have been possible to discuss such a trumpery point as an Ambassador's "fitness" in connection with the length of his purse and his capacity for ostentatious display. That such a man as Dr. Hill should feel himself bored among "Transparencies," Court Chamberlains, Gold Sticks, Silver Sticks, Black Rods,<sup>1</sup> *Vortänzer*,<sup>1</sup> and other histrionic "supers," might be assumed; that he should not care for the blare of brass bands, which Prince Hohenlohe complained of as "such a vile nuisance," at the everlasting gala, parade and festive lunches, dinners, and Court functions, will also be readily understood; that, however, he could have felt "uncomfortable," in the sense of being awed or impressed by such surroundings, is most unlikely. But the Court Marshals, and other irresponsible intriguers—those that Bismarck had contemptuously termed Court lackeys—might well be expected to feel "uncomfortable" in the presence of a really eminent man; and it is not surprising to hear that they could not rest until the nightmare of his superiority in everything which constitutes moral value, sincerity, veracity, and loyalty was removed from their sight.

When Dr. Hill arrived in Berlin he bore himself with the dignity of one of Nature's gentlemen. Referring to the unedifying Press campaign which immediately preceded his arrival, he said to a friend: "I will not allow my thoughts to be disturbed by a heaviness which has passed, an incident which is closed. I have come here with goodwill towards every one, and I wish this frame of mind to be mine in my dealings with all men."

<sup>1</sup> The English language does not, as far as I know, possess an equivalent term for the function of a leader of court dances.

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If I dwell somewhat at length on this topic it is because I believe that the part of an American Ambassador in Berlin may, in the near future, become one of more international importance in connection with the ever-recurrent differences between England and Germany and the United States than that of all the Court Marshals in Europe. Another reason, of a personal nature, why I have expanded my notes is that the raising of the question of Dr. Jayne Hill's qualification for the post of Ambassador touches my philosophy of life in its bearing on imaginary and real values. If distinction of character, a spotless record in private life, a temperament of benevolence and goodwill towards all men, and a high standard of intellectual attainments be *criteria*, then I say that I have never in my life met three picked men of any profession to surpass the three representatives of the United States whom I have named. It takes 100,000 men or more to produce an Andrew D. White or a David Jayne Hill, whereas every third decently grown adult could be turned into a Court lackey or a hall-porter. There is a ridiculous glamour attached to the profession of a courtier in this age of impressionist superficialities and insincerities. As a matter of fact, the manners and modes of thought of a courtier are really inferior manners and modes of thought. They can only be inferior, for the courtier lives in an atmosphere of servility, where the dignity and independence from which alone the best thought and manners can spring must be lacking. The profession of a courtier is, and remains, a derogatory one, which can only be redeemed by a rare combination of tact and intelligence, such, for instance, as was possessed by the late Count Götz von Seckendorff.

I met Count Seckendorff in the winter of 1905-6 at the house of the Privy Councillor of Legation, Herr Raschdau, formerly Prussian Minister at the Court of Weimar, and remained in close touch with him, either by direct personal contact or correspondence, until his death. I still possess a specimen of Adolf Hildebrand's beautiful silver medallion of

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Bismarck's profile, which the Count gave me the last time I saw him in Berlin, where he occupied a charming apartment in the Oberwallstrasse, behind the palace of the Emperor William I. It was furnished with exquisite taste, and contained many treasures of Italian Renaissance work, bronzes, medallions, rare gold and silver coins, tankards, miniatures, and some drawings of the Empress Frederick, all of which he delighted to show me when he invited me to lunch with him on his birthday.

From our first acquaintance we found many topics in which we were both interested—notably the relations between England and Germany, with regard to which Count Seckendorff was an unbiassed observer. Being on intimate terms with the English Royal Family and with many of the English aristocracy he was well informed on both sides. With all his German patriotism he had strong English sympathies, so that in our many conversations on political matters I now and then found him championing the English side of the situation whilst I was endeavouring to put in a good word for Germany. He said that if England were to send a strong man of the type of Lord Cromer to Berlin as Ambassador, and Germany were to send a suitable personage to London, a great deal more might be done towards arriving at an amicable understanding than by any number of “decorative” visits. But he regretted that there were certain occult influences in Berlin which were bent on preventing friendly relations with England, and these had hitherto been opposed to such an appointment which the English were quite ready to make.

Count Seckendorff assured me that the desire for an understanding with Germany had undoubtedly been honest on the part of England, but already, years ago, the advances of Mr. Chamberlain had been repulsed in Berlin. When King Edward came to the throne he took over an unsatisfactory condition of things, of which he had to make the best he could. The reproach that he harboured enmity to Germany was a grave injustice. A good understanding with Germany had always been a matter near his heart, as he was a great admirer of the German people, though not of everything German, and

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more particularly Prussian. Count Seckendorff related to me a variety of personal incidents which would go a long way towards explaining a certain *aigreur* in high circles, as well as much of the diplomatic tension between England and Germany. He told me that the German Emperor lives in an imaginary world, a mirage as regards the reality of things; and bitterly complained that nobody had the courage to tell him the truth or advise him honestly in accordance with it. Count Seckendorff was *persona grata* with King Edward, being one of the very few unofficial Germans whom the English Sovereign expressly invited to his coronation.

I was staying in Berlin for some months at the time of the Algeciras Conference, and, as we were both early risers, Count Seckendorff used to come to my hotel every other morning and share my breakfast with me at eight o'clock. We spent some evenings together, when he would take pleasure in bringing me into touch with some of his personal friends and relatives, among the former Countess Wolkenstein, once, as Countess Schleinitz, known as an enthusiastic champion of Richard Wagner. I also met him repeatedly at dinner, as a guest of Prince Bülow, in the Reichskanzler Palais, and elsewhere.

Count Seckendorff was a distinguished-looking man, who united in his person the best culture of England, France, Germany, and Italy, the languages of which countries he spoke with equal fluency. He had not mixed in Court life without being a sure-footed walker on the most slippery of polished floors. One who knew him well said to me, "He was an expert swimmer even in the most treacherous waters."

Count Seckendorff had been for many years attached to the household of the Emperor Frederick, and was *Maître de la Cour*, or *Oberhofmeister*, to the Empress Frederick till her death. He shared and fostered her artistic tastes. His authority on art matters was highly valued by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances in different countries. This interest he endeavoured to utilise in a truly cosmopolitan spirit to further national affinities by bringing together the artistic work of nations. On this account alone the Count's death

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may, without exaggeration, be held to be an international loss to the cause of peace, concord, and culture. He was instrumental in bringing about an exhibition of French art at Berlin; but his most notable achievement in this direction was the share he took in arranging the remarkable exhibition of English pictures at Berlin in the winter of 1907-8, which came to the Prussian capital as a perfect revelation of the treasures of British art. Probably only Count Seckendorff could have persuaded so many English collectors to lend the priceless masterpieces that were exhibited on that occasion. The Emperor Frederick Museum was also, I believe, largely indebted to Count Seckendorff's artistic efforts.

The following letter, dated January 8, 1908—one of many—refers to the exhibition of English pictures in Berlin :

“DEAR MR. WHITMAN,

“I return your kind wishes for a happy New Year with all my heart.

“Thanks for the cutting. So sorry that I could not come and see you when in London the other day. I was occupied with the forthcoming exhibition. Thanks to British gallantry I hope that it will be a great success, and contribute towards that which ever so many *visits* cannot do. When all is well over I shall come—when the rhododendrons are blooming—to old England, and enjoy once more your ever-glorious country.

“I trust you have felt a little for us, *car j'espère que vous nous gardez un cœur ouvert.*

“*Your* fine pictures will be, as you say, *pour une autre fois.* Get hold of the *Memoiren der Frau von Rochow* (new) *am Preussischen Hofe.*

“Once more—*tanti felicissimi auguri.*

“Faithfully yours,

“GÖTZ SECKENDORFF.”

Count Seckendorff's career was an interesting one; he was present at the battle of Sedan, and used to relate with a certain pride how the Emperor William took his pocket-book as a rest,

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which he himself held, whilst the Monarch wrote his reply to the letter of surrender which he had received from the Emperor Napoleon.

England never had a truer and more clear-sighted friend, nor one who more deeply deplored the estrangement which has gradually grown up between the two kindred nations. He saw with impartiality the faults on both sides, and used his great influence to smooth matters over in high places. One of his greatest regrets was the extraordinary ignorance which, as he believed, existed in both countries in regard to the other, and more particularly in England as to Germany. He told me that he had met very few Englishmen in his whole life who really knew more than the mere surface of Germany. Among those few was King Edward, and he attributed this to the fact that he was partially German by descent.

Many were the topics which we discussed together in the kindly spirit of "give and take," which always left me with a feeling of deep sympathy for him. This was, perhaps, only natural, inasmuch as we can but feel kindly and grateful to those who pay us the compliment of taking us unreservedly into their confidence. Count Seckendorff was proudly conscious of the power and greatness of his own country, but thought that Germany had not yet had sufficient time to acquire the social refinement which she needed to balance the high moral and intellectual attainments of the German people. This seemed to him to be more particularly the case with North Germany; one of his favourite quotations on this subject was :

Dein Lied ist roh  
Allein des Nordmann's Wüste schuf es so.<sup>1</sup>

I have already written somewhat extensively on the German army, yet I feel my memories would not be complete without a short reference to the military element, with which I have

<sup>1</sup> "Thy song is rude—  
Alas ! the Norseman's sandy waste hath made it so."

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come into frequent contact, and among which I still prize a number of friends. Independently of my acquaintance with Counts Moltke and Blumenthal and the great number of distinguished soldiers I have met in German society, I have been a frequent guest at different officers' messes at Dresden, Berlin, and Erfurt, all most pleasant reminiscences now that over twenty years have elapsed since the last occasion when I enjoyed this hospitality. The fare was plain and the wines were inexpensive, the cost of the former scarcely running to one mark a head, and the latter to about the same price per bottle; but so excellent were invariably both food and wine that I would gladly partake of them to-day in preference to the fare at many an expensive hotel.

Nothing could exceed the courtesy and goodwill with which a stranger, introduced by a brother officer, was met; far exceeding in its cordiality that which I believe to be usual in other armies. The officer who brings a guest to dinner does not introduce him to his comrades, but only to the superior presiding officer. Thereupon the other officers take the initiative—as is usual towards strangers throughout German society—and come forward and introduce themselves to their comrade's guest. This custom, so different to our own social habits, whilst it may occasionally lead to a certain unwelcome obtrusiveness, has at all events the pleasant effect of banishing all *gêne* and *fausse honte*—the bane of the stranger in all but the best English society, unless he happens to be one of those whose wide experience of social life places him beyond any feeling of nervousness in strange company. A peculiar etiquette, which I believe to be solely current in German military circles, is the passive *rôle* assigned at table to young non-commissioned officers, ensigns who are undergoing their period of probation before obtaining lieutenant's rank. They are admitted to dine at the officers' mess, but they are not yet supposed to have acquired the full *status* of social equality, and thus are not expected to start a conversation at table, but only to reply when addressed. I have seen men of princely birth play an absolutely passive part on such occasions. On

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the other hand, a man who is once an officer, even if only the youngest lieutenant, moves, when off duty, on a plane of social equality with a full general. I remember spending an evening with a number of officers of the Guards in a reserved apartment of a Berlin restaurant at which the late General von Meerscheidt-Huellessen, the commander of the Garde Corps, was present. Some sergeants performed humorous sketches for the amusement of those present, and the prevailing tone was one of jovial, almost boisterous hilarity; nothing denoted the slightest distinction between the youngest lieutenant and the full "Excellency." This spirit of comradeship, I fancy, exists nowhere to the same extent, not even in the Austrian army, where a certain distance invariably separates the higher grades in the army from the subaltern, even when off duty. In Germany it would be considered a lack of courtesy for a full general not to reciprocate the advances which the youngest subaltern is privileged, and indeed called upon, to make to his superior in rank. In England several cases come to my mind in which even staff officers have not felt themselves at liberty to ask to be introduced to a general.

During one of my visits to Count Bethusy-Huc in September 1891, I had an opportunity of witnessing the Silesian autumn manœuvres. The late Count William Moltke, heir of Field-Marshal Moltke's Creisau estate and a relative of Countess Bethusy, paid her a visit with several officers. One of them, Major von König, a Hanoverian, a remarkably handsome man, had been on the staff of Prince Frederick Charles in the 1870 war. Another told us a story of his own experiences. During the forced march to Sedan with his regiment they met Moltke and his staff on the road. One of the officers of my informant's regiment ventured to ask him how things were going, to which Moltke replied with a twinkle: "The trap is shut and the mouse is inside." This in obvious anticipatory reference to the climax of Sedan, which took effect a few days afterwards.

Count Moltke was colonel of a cavalry regiment which was

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taking part in the manœuvres not far away, and he invited me and an English friend of mine, who had been an officer in an English cavalry regiment, to be his guests for the next day.

Count Bethusy-Huc himself drove us very early next morning to the trysting-place, where we were to be supplied with horses and to take part in the proceedings. It was a small provincial town. The *réveille* had just sounded and the soldiers were tumbling out of their quarters; quite a stirring sight to see the Uhlans issue forth in single file as patrols, followed by small squads of hussars and columns of infantry. "There goes Moltke's brown mare," cried an officer, who recognised my portly "mount." We had a most enjoyable time careering over the fields after the troops engaged in mimic warfare. We rode past woods filled with sharpshooters who, according to the opinion of my English friend, would not have left one of us alive in real warfare. We looked on at impossible cavalry charges; but this did not interfere with an excellent appetite at luncheon time, partaken of in the open air. A General von Liegnitz was in supreme command, and he, as well as the members of his staff, received us most kindly.

On one occasion in the eighties I was invited to take part in an afternoon shooting-match held by the members of the Berlin Officierschietssverein, on the Hasenheide, at which the Commander of the Garde Corps was present. I had had many years' practice at rifle-shooting and had won several cups at different German shooting meetings, and was now fortunate enough to carry off two prizes, one of which consisted of a fancy-painted target. I presented it to the Rifle Corps of Schreiberhau, of which I was an honorary member, and in the *Schützenhaus* of which, for all I know, it may still be seen among other trophies. However, it is only fair to add that the officer through whom I received the invitation was prevented at the last moment from accompanying me. Had he been present he would probably have supplanted me, for he was reputed to be the best rifle shot in the Prussian army.

At a later date I was present at a gathering of officers of the

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great general staff on one of their so-called *Generalstabsreisen* (staff rides) at Ilmenau in Thuringia. This is one of my most interesting military reminiscences, as it afforded me an insight into an institution which originated in Prussia and has since been adopted by every army throughout the world. The gathering comprised sixty or seventy officers of different grades, either belonging to the great general staff or specially attached thereto for service therein for a given time. The conditions were those of the strictest subordination of all present under the colonel in command, who, to judge by his appearance, was a very brainy personage. His disciplinary supremacy even at dinner was maintained, for when the post arrived all letters were delivered into his hands and given by him to the members of the staff as he read out the names one after the other.

I was the only civilian guest at the anniversary dinner of the battle of Gravelotte given by the Second Guard Regiment on August 18, 1889, at which the hereditary Prince of Meiningen presided and 130 officers were present. Military after-dinner oratory had not yet come into fashion, and, as far as I can recollect, not a single speech was made. Altogether my experiences of German military life do not fit in at all with the version given in Count Baudissin's novels, in Beyerlein's well-known romance, and also in that sensational book, *Aus einer kleinen Garnison*. If these works have any solid basis in fact I can only surmise that the conditions in the German army to-day must have undergone a great change since my experience of them, when Carlyle's brute-God Mammon had not yet fixed his cruel claws into the flesh of the German officer corps. What these conditions were at a previous period is set forth to some extent in the chapter dealing with Field-Marshal Count Blumenthal. Those were days in which luxury, gambling, and the frenzied quest for rich wives were comparatively unknown in the Prussian army. My own experiences find their nearest parallel in the military sketches written long before my time by Hacklaender; in which the quality of human sympathy as between brother

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officers and their subordinates casts a sympathetic glow over the career of arms in Germany.

I made the acquaintance of General Verdy du Vernois in Berlin shortly after his retirement from the post of Prussian Minister of War. I met him again in Constantinople in 1896 and was subsequently instrumental in bringing out an English edition of his most interesting reminiscences of 1870.<sup>1</sup> He was a most intellectual man and a highly entertaining companion. I saw him for the last time in Berlin, during the Algeciras Conference; when he expressed himself with deep concern regarding the uncertain state of things: more particularly in respect to the antagonism between England and Germany which had come about of late.

A German officer having recommended me to read the late Count Yorck von Wartenburg's work on *Napoleon als Feldherr*, I did so, and after some correspondence with the author I was also successful in getting that excellent book translated into English and published in an English edition;<sup>2</sup> though I regret to say that I never had the pleasure of meeting the author, whose brilliant career was prematurely cut short by his death in China.

The Spanish-American War afforded me an opportunity of meeting several distinguished German military writers. I was in Berlin at the time, and the *New York Herald* was anxious to know German military opinion on the chances of the United States army in the intended invasion of Cuba. The authorities whom I consulted were the well-known military writers, Captain Fritz Hönig, Colonel Pellet-Narbonne, and General von Boguslawski; all three since deceased. With every respect to their memory, I may yet mention that these military authorities were wrong in their estimate of the situation; for all three were decidedly of opinion that the chances of the Americans were hopeless against the Spanish

<sup>1</sup> *With the Royal Headquarters 1870-71*, by General von Verdy du Vernois. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Napoleon as a General*, by Count Yorck von Wartenburg. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1902.

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troops under General Blanco, unless the United States proceeded to land 200,000 men in Cuba. As a matter of fact, the United States forces which, with the support of the American fleet, conquered Cuba could scarcely have reached one-eighth of that number.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CONCLUSION

CONCLUDING my experiences in the spirit indicated in the preface, I recall a few impressions and incidents which occur to me as reflecting some suggestive features of German life and character. The stranger entering Germany from the west, the east, or the south can scarcely fail to be struck by the clean aspect of the towns, the tidiness and order of the population. It is only on arriving from Switzerland, or from the highly developed Scandinavian countries in the north, that these features and the contrast they imply are less striking. Nowhere are there to be seen that dirty, foul pipe and pestilential cigarette-puffing residuum which infest our large towns.

One summer afternoon I took a stroll outside Cologne along the Rhine quay to the Flora Garden Restaurant to hear the band. There were many people about, for it was Saturday, and hundreds of workmen were leaving their work. I scanned them carefully. A very few were smoking cigars, two or three had pipes, and I noticed that they were the only untidily dressed among the whole throng. Of cigarette smokers I saw none.

In the tramcars between Berlin and Charlottenburg, of an evening, I have often counted considerably more passengers reading books than newspapers. Smokers were at all times very few. No smoking cars being provided, those who wish to smoke have to stand outside on the foot-board. These examples, cited at random, might, I am sure, be paralleled every day throughout the year in fifty German towns, more particularly in the north. In all my experiences of factory life,

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coming into contact with many hundreds of working men, I cannot recall a single instance of habitual drunkenness or gambling among them; whereas drink, gluttony, gambling, and rowdyism have been on the increase among strata which would resent being included as "workers." This absence of excess on the part of the masses is all the more remarkable since beer, wine and spirits are far cheaper than in England, and there is practically no limit to the facilities for drinking and gambling at all hours: cards and dice are obtainable at most restaurants and beerhouses in the empire. The many vexatious restrictions of our licensing laws as regards closing time and the prohibition to sell liquor outside the premises (in the open air in a garden) do not exist in Germany: the fact that they are not needed supplies eloquent testimony to the high sociological level of the German people.

Much is made of the arbitrary nature of German police regulations, the ever-present monition that something or other is prohibited—*Verboten*—and there is of course for this a foundation in fact, as there is a reverse side to every question. I have been pushed off the pavement by the police at the Friedrichstrasse station on the arrival of some archducal nonentity to the accompaniment of the Austrian national hymn brayed forth by a brass band, and have survived the disagreeable experience. But many of the police prohibitions are conceived in the best interest of the public, as evidenced by the numerous notices to be seen in public gardens that the ornamental grounds are "herewith recommended to the protection of the public." But I doubt whether in the whole schedule of German police prohibitions there is any paragraph embodying such degrading treatment of the German people as those contained and rigidly enforced in our licensing laws regarding the regulation of the liquor traffic on Sundays.

Somehow, in spite of a thousand police regulations, a sense of freedom comes over us, which is marred there where the land is parcelled out and divided up by high walls and hedges down to the last square foot. The South of Germany, for instance, as pointed out by Mr. C. G. Masterman in his

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illuminating work, *The Condition of England*,<sup>1</sup> makes the impression of being one large garden with the beauty of a "peasants' country." There is a feeling for space which meets you in the broad planning of railways, public buildings, even public pleasure resorts, and teeming life meets you everywhere on rivers, canals, and roadsides. At Kiel, even on the Alster basin at Hamburg, there are nearly as many pleasure craft to be seen as on Southampton Water in the month of August. People get up early even for pleasure. The railway stations are crowded with excursionists on holidays as early as five o'clock in the morning in the summer. I have noticed a man fishing thus early on a Sunday morning near Potsdam. There is a sense of enjoyment of nature in this people. Without a great increase in national wealth it would have been obviously impossible to create much that has been accomplished. Rarely has money been expended so judiciously or with such a breadth of mind and fulness of heart as in Germany in our time. This has been notably the case in the construction of hospitals, the laying out of cemeteries in the country, far from the madding crowd: the *Friedhof*, the haven of peace—the *Campo-Santo* of the Italians—where rose-trees are cultivated and the idealism of a people finds expression.

The efficiency of the public services in Germany, such as the post, the telegraph, and the railway, is generally recognised, but some are inclined to think that this efficiency is purchased at the price of cramping the initiative of the individual, which is also a valuable asset in a people's ledger. As a matter of fact, at no time in German history has private enterprise been so active as to-day. But, however this may be, it will take a deal of "individual initiative" to achieve some of the feats of organisation which are to be seen at work as a part of everyday life in Germany, and which, in the case of railways, might be of vital importance to the very existence of the State in time of war. I will only cite a couple of instances of this efficiency which have come under my notice, and which, I believe, could not easily be paralleled outside Germany.

<sup>1</sup> London: Methuen & Co., 1909.



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I was waiting at the Friedrichstrasse railway station one evening in November 1905, to take the train to Warsaw, and being well before my time saw a number of far-bound trains arriving and leaving in quick succession, within a few minutes of each other. My inquiries elicited the information that every evening five express trains start from the same platform of the Friedrichstrasse Station all within the short space of 37 minutes: for Posen, 10.55 P.M.; for Dantzic, 11.1 P.M.; St. Petersburg, *via* Koenigsberg, 11.18 P.M.; for Warsaw, 11.24 P.M.; for Vienna, *via* Breslau, 11.32 P.M. I was told that a similar service of trains starts every forenoon. These bald figures, however, by no means convey the exceptional nature of this feat in railway organisation, for it must be borne in mind that each of these trains is of considerable proportions: a huge locomotive and rolling stock equipped for a long journey through the night with sleeping cars, postal service, and, in some cases, with restaurant cars attached. These trains are made up at the suburban station of Charlottenburg, and start punctually to the minute on their journey, as already stated, within six or eight minutes of each other. What this efficient organisation would mean in time of war to an enemy who might be incapable of meeting it with one of equal capacity may be left to the imagination; inasmuch as the German system of mobilisation provides for the automatic replacement of the time-table in every-day use by a military one in time of war.

Another, although a minor, feature of railway travelling is the punctual fitting-in at junctions of trains where the traveller has only a few minutes, sometimes not more than a minute or two, to transfer himself and his luggage to another line. Here only the greatest all-round punctuality could produce such results as are obtained in Germany. It is, of course, humanly impossible that cases should not occur in which the connection is missed, but I do not remember having been thus disappointed. I was recently staying at Plaue, a village in Thuringia, and wanted to reach Cologne without taking the roundabout way, *via* Frankfurt. The direct route lay *via* Cassel, where my train was timed to arrive with ten minutes to spare, in order to catch

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the junction train to Cologne. Unfortunately it was not possible to book further than Cassel. In order to meet the case the stationmaster at Plaue volunteered to telegraph to Cassel to arrange things for me; and, it being considered a service matter, charged me the nominal sum of threepence for the telegram. On my arrival at Cassel I saw a porter on the platform, evidently on the look-out, holding up a pole on which was a big placard with the words, "Ticket for Cologne." I hailed him, and he handed me a railway ticket and a receipt for my luggage, in accordance with his telegraphic instructions.

As regards the German postal service I may mention that letters are delivered twice on weekdays in every village throughout the German Empire; when near a railway station oftener; on Sundays and other holidays at least once. At Plaue, as in many other German villages, the post-office is as large as one in a moderate-sized town in other countries. Finally, there is no time of the day or night at which a telegram will not be received and immediately despatched.

Prince Bismarck's eightieth birthday afforded me an excellent opportunity of testing the great efficiency of the German telegraph officials. A wooden shed had been erected at Friedrichsruh close to the post-office for this exceptional occasion, with rows of seats and desks for the many journalists who had arrived from all parts. The staff of telegraph clerks had been largely augmented in proportion. I sent about two thousand words in English to the *Herald*, and they arrived without a single mistake. I feel sure that the same was the case with other journalists of different nationalities. The work of the staff was most thoroughly and willingly performed. I handed in my material in sections. The readiness with which they were taken from me, and carefully scrutinised by the telegraph clerks, who were conversant with English, was remarkable, and the intelligence and courtesy displayed have remained engraven on my memory.

So much has been said of the uncongenial manners and methods of German officialdom that the following instance of a gratuitous act of courtesy may be narrated without apology,

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the more so as it illustrates the deep interest in art which is prevalent among all classes.

Two gentlemen, one an old friend of mine, arrived in Cologne from London late on the last night of the year 1897. They were timed to leave Cologne in the afternoon of the next day, and thought they would spend the morning by inspecting the famous Wallraf-Richartz Museum, which contains some fine specimens of the old Cologne school of painters. They found the museum closed. The hall porter informed them that New Year's Day was one of the very few occasions on which the attendants were allowed a holiday. He added that, as the gentlemen said they could not delay their departure, the Director (Curator) of the museum might, perhaps, give them permission to view the pictures if they applied to him. Having obtained his address, my friend, who is an art enthusiast, wrote a short note to Herr Hofrath Professor Carl Aldenhoven (since deceased), and sent it by a commissionaire to his residence, about two English miles from the museum. The answer came promptly back: "Please expect me at your hotel. I will call upon you in half an hour." The Professor duly arrived, showed my friends over the museum, explained everything in the most interesting manner, and finally took cordial leave of them.<sup>1</sup>

As a further indication of the deep interest in art matters taken by all classes of the population, I may mention on the authority of Professor Aldenhoven that after Mass on Sundays and other Roman Catholic holy days, when many of the peasantry of the surrounding villages stream into Cologne, the run on the picture gallery between the hours of 11 and 1 is so great that people have to wait their turn to obtain admission.

One of the features of German life which has assisted to make Germany what she is to-day is the high esteem in which

<sup>1</sup> I gratefully acknowledge herewith a similar act of courtesy on the part of the Director of the Hamburg Museum in the month of September 1911. He kindly allowed me to inspect the beautiful picture gallery during closed hours, as I was leaving the city the same afternoon.

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the vocation of teaching is held, Scandinavia and the United States coming in this respect much nearer to Germany than Great Britain. In Russia princes figure as professors at universities. I met at Moscow a prince of the great house of Troubetzkoi who was professor at the University of Kiew. On one of my recent visits to Berlin I saw an endless cortège of mourning carriages and pedestrians filing along the Hallische Ufer, and was told that this was the funeral of a Berlin professor of philosophy (Paulsen). Even more striking from an insular point of view was my experience many years ago, when I was a witness of a rousing torchlight procession at Bonn in celebration of the twenty-fifth year of service of a school-mistress at one of the *Volksschulen* in that town. The Socialists are ever to the fore in participating in demonstrations of this kind, which add an element of picturesque richness to the life of the people. In spite of certain social and political disabilities, which still affect a large section of the German nation, the life of the people is in many respects far richer than with us. This is patent in the wide possibilities of education open to all classes, and the many means for self-culture provided by the high character of the drama and other forms of popular recreation. Here the social element is of great importance, as it enters largely into the life of the masses: the so-called *Vereinsleben*, in which are included gymnastic societies, choral unions, mountain-climbing, &c. The Austro-German Alpine Club, for instance, has a membership of fifty thousand, as compared with five hundred in the exclusive English association of that kind. Game-shooting, which with us is an expensive and aristocratic sport reserved for the rich, is participated in by all classes in Germany. The number of game licences runs into hundreds of thousands, and this without the stock of game being thereby diminished, for the laws which regulate close time are strictly adhered to, and if transgressed severe punishment is inflicted. All these features of German life contribute towards the cultivation of the imagination of the people, abundant evidence of which is to be gained by those

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who have associated with and taken note of their social life. Many are the instances of kindly consideration I recall bespeaking a high degree of cultivation of the heart and delicacy of feeling among the masses, of which the following instance—one of many—strikes me as worthy of record.

One summer morning, walking with a friend in Berlin, I hailed a droschky of the first class—what we should call a “victoria,” such as can be got for hire in the streets of Berlin, and, to my thinking, the most comfortable conveyance to be met with anywhere—and told the man to drive us to the Dönhoff Platz. There my friend alighted, and asked me to wait in the carriage for him whilst he paid a short call at a house in front of which we halted. To my surprise the coachman drove to the opposite side of the road, where he drew up as I thought to get clear of the traffic. In a couple of minutes he drove back again and stopped at the exact spot at which my friend had got out. This rather puzzled me, so I asked what made him drive to the other side of the road and then come back. “Oh, sir,” he replied, “I noticed that you had the sun in your eyes over there!” It is, I admit, a trifling incident, but one which speaks eloquently for the culture of that particular class. I have yet to meet the London cabman, however civil he might be, who would trouble about his fare being inconvenienced by the sun.

The high standing enjoyed by every branch of science in Germany is generally recognised. Thus the medical profession is held in great esteem everywhere, except, strange to say, in the army, where it should by rights stand highest. Surgeons were in great repute in the armies of Napoleon, and were treated with exceptional consideration by that great soldier. Royal Princes—the eminent oculist, Duke Karl Theodor of Bavaria, and his wife to wit—devote themselves to the profession of medicine, mainly for the benefit of the poor, and Royal Princesses become nurses in wartime, as I have already pointed out in the case of the present Queen of Bulgaria. It is not the famous practitioner making a large income, a type very much in evidence of late in Berlin, who is most highly thought of.

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He is often regarded as a mere *Mode-Arzt*, a fashionable doctor—the term implying a certain stigma, depreciation, and declension from the high plane of science for its own sake. The fact of being body physician to the Sovereign, which ensures a great private practice in England, by no means does the same in Germany.

To the honour of the German medical profession be it said that, at least until recently, the sense of duty of its members to their patients was singularly independent of the scale of emolument or other worldly considerations received. In the winter of 1876-7 the present Dowager Queen of Sweden went to Heidelberg, and stayed there some weeks to undergo treatment at the hands of Professor Friedreich, of the University. I remember that the Professor made a point of attending to all his official duties, including his poor patients in the infirmary, before he paid his daily visit to the Queen.

Within more recent years an English duchess went to Wiesbaden to consult Dr. Pagenstecher. The great oculist declared that he could only undertake the treatment of her grace if she lived in his “*klinik*,” and boarded there with his other patients. I am told that this new experience of a free-and-easy intercourse with her fellow creatures of modest circumstances did the old lady a world of good and contributed to her recovery. As an instance of the appreciation of the medical profession by German ladies of high rank, the case of the marriage of a Princess of Schleswig-Holstein to Professor Esmarch comes to mind. But even more apposite is that of a Wurtemberg Princess who married a doctor in Breslau about thirty years ago. The clergyman officiating at the wedding proceeded to dwell on the deep and unselfish nature of an affection which could induce a princess to sacrifice the advantages of high rank and luxury at the altar. The bride interposed, and, rising before the congregation, said she could not allow such a statement to pass unchallenged. She desired to affirm once and for all that, in marrying the man of her choice, she was not conscious of having surrendered anything to which she attached the slightest importance. Her husband, far from gaining social *prestige* by

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his "great" marriage, is said to have rather lost caste among his colleagues for having married out of his sphere.

The medical man who, without prospect of affluence, is the trusted family medical adviser, calls for special recognition. Here sometimes under a rough exterior—for many German doctors rise from humble conditions, in which they have had scant opportunity for acquiring that tact and social polish which are requisites in their vocation—a high average and often great scientific attainments are found, with an unselfish devotion to duty which is truly admirable, the feeling of the responsibility of their calling dominating every other consideration. Cases have come under my notice in which the family doctor has cheerfully foregone his annual holiday in order to attend a patient, and by no means a wealthy one, whom he feared might suffer by his absence. Such men obtain their best reward in the confidence and gratitude of their patients, for even in cases of serious illness it has been hitherto unusual for Germans to desert their family doctor and call in a specialist.

Such men as Langenbeck, Virchow, Czerny, and many others whose names are household words in medical science, neither make as much money as similar men in England, nor are they awarded the honours and titles by their Sovereign which a successful man in almost every walk of life can apparently command with us. In Germany their appreciation is that of their fellow countrymen, which many regard as far more valuable. In spite of the widespread craving for decorations and the outward deference to jacks-in-office, men of science and learning maintain an independent position, and resent attempts at social patronage. A printed invitation "to meet" a prince, quite a compliment with us, would be regarded by men of intellectual standing as little short of an impertinence. "Let him be invited to meet me" would probably be the mental attitude of the professor. That this independence of the "intellectual" sometimes tends to arrogance cannot well be doubted; but there it is. The feeling of reverence which a peer, or an ambassador, used to inspire in Mr. Gladstone would be difficult to find among the "intellectuals" in Germany.

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It would be impossible to imagine a Helmholtz, a Mommsen, or a Herman Grimm "introduced" to an audience at a public lecture by a peer acting as chairman. The highest in the land are eligible as members of the Reichstag, and some few of them are indeed now and then chosen—for instance, Prince Henry Carolath Schoenaich—but not one man of title is included to-day among the figureheads of that body. The late Herr Krupp did not succeed in being elected in his own constituency, where about 30,000 of his workmen are among the electors. Even eminent ex-Ministers have the greatest difficulty in finding a constituency willing to elect them; this in itself is a decided loss to public life. Reverence for wealth, birth, and rank is almost confined to those who possess them, and is not always to be found even there. Indeed, there is very little of it to be met with among the mass of the German people, and this holds good in spite of the craving for titles and ornamental distinctions of a large section of German society. The caste feeling which exists among the nobility, finds, under the present *régime*, a powerful support in the army and at two or three universities, and only tends to intensify the cleavage between the upper classes and the rest of the population—the intellectual *élite*, *bourgeoisie* and Socialists. In proof of this assertion, which may come as a surprise to the superficial observer, I may cite the authority of Paul de Lagarde, who declared thirty years ago that the nobility—except the sovereign princes—counts for little in Germany.

In September 1901, I was invited to take part in the trial trip of the Bremen Lloyd steamer, *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, to Norway and Scotland, in which over 350 German notabilities participated. Instead, as would have been the case with us, of the "big guns" dining at one centre table, and the "small fry" being accommodated with inferior places at dinner, lots for seats at table were drawn every day. Thus it came to pass that Herr Krupp, the "heaviest" rich man of Germany, and Prince Henckel Donnersmarck, another of the wealthiest men and an old feudal noble to boot, came to sit with nobodies.



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Can we imagine Andrew Carnegie or a Duke of Devonshire being placed in a similar predicament by an English steamship company?

In sharp contrast to the worship of wealth and position a feeling is growing among German womanhood that an existence of ease and luxury, without a serious aim in life, is an unworthy one. This sentiment was tragically exemplified in the case of a friend of mine. He had studied law and entered upon a diplomatic career, when he met a lady of rare beauty with a large fortune and married her. The first year of their marriage was one long honeymoon, spent in travel; now and then marked by the young wife urging her husband to take up some serious occupation; for he had retired from the diplomatic service on his marriage. A highly cultivated man with literary tastes, his wife was anxious that he should turn these to account. They ultimately settled down in a beautiful villa which she had acquired. Some time afterwards he met a friend of his youth, a struggling sculptor, without means or connections. Being of a generous disposition, he built a studio expressly for him in the garden adjoining his villa, so that he should be at liberty to work at his profession free from care. But he was not equally fortunate in finding an occupation for himself, and prevailed upon his wife to start travelling again, in spite of her recurrent exhortations. Another couple of years passed by, when they returned to their villa, where they found the sculptor hard at work. One day his wife said to him: "You know how often I have urged you to take up an occupation worthy of you, for I cannot imagine either happiness, or indeed self-respect, in idleness. You have not listened to me, and it is now too late; for I take an interest in your friend; he has gained my respect and supplanted you in my affections. Take half my fortune and let me be free to marry him."

This came as a thunderbolt to my friend. He was in despair, for he was devotedly attached to his wife, and he implored her to reconsider her decision. But there was no going back. He indignantly declined his wife's offer of her fortune; but,

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according to the German law a divorce was possible, and it was obtained. She left him, married the sculptor, and went away for ever. Many years later I met my friend again. He had made a literary reputation, and lived in the very same studio which he had once generously placed at the disposal of his sculptor friend. Not a word passed his lips of the tragedy of his life ; but the portrait of his beautiful dark-eyed wife looked down from the wall—as it seemed to me—in pity on his solitude—his wrecked happiness !

A glance at the German book trade—more particularly the many publishers and booksellers, and the high standing of the best among them—throws an instructive light on the omnivorous appetite for reading which exists among the German people of all classes. Their business places are the resort of literary notabilities, as a few such were in London and Edinburgh in the eighteenth century. Scientific works which in England can only be issued with the financial assistance of learned societies are nearly all brought out in Germany at the sole risk and expense of the publishers in Leipsic, Berlin, Stuttgart, and Munich, each of which cities is prominent in the order mentioned. The history of the leading publishing firms in Germany is set forth in the great national encyclopædias as matter of public interest, while many names of ministers and diplomatists and noble families of the country are not mentioned, unless in the cases of some exceptionally eminent men.

It is not exaggerating to say that the appetite for reading matter among the German people is scarcely less keen than that for eating and drinking. Here the Socialists, as in several other respects, are foremost. In a recent number of the *Vorwärts* I saw it stated that the aims of the Socialists were not so much concerned with the acquisition of more wages, material benefits, as such, as with obtaining the means of beautifying the life of the people by enlarging their opportunities for self-culture. The best of them have adopted Spinoza's axiom : "I sell the work of my hands ; but I keep the product of my brain to myself." They want that "place

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in the sun" in their own country which the German well-to-do class is clamouring for in distant parts of the world.

The catalogue of books published by the bookseller's firm connected with the *Vorwärts*, and appealing almost entirely to the working classes, is a surprising one. It embraces a cosmopolitan selection of the best works on history, political economy and belles-lettres of all countries; some of them are expensive publications, the titles of which are suggestive:

M. Maurenbrecher: "The Hohenzollern Legend,"	
in 50 parts (complete)	14/-
Inama Sternegg: "German Agriculture and	
Husbandry"	£2 10/-
Conrady: "History of Revolutions"	10/-
Sven Hedin: "Travels in the East"	£1
Year-Books dealing with Communal Affairs	15/- to 20/-
	each.

Nearly two pages each are devoted to different publications dealing with Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx. The same space is taken up by the list of writings of Bebel, of Kautsky, and of Bernstein, some of which are pamphlets circulating by the hundred thousand. The catalogue contains the names of close upon four hundred authors, many English among them: Burns, Dickens, Kipling, Tyndall, W. Ashley, Henry George, Bellamy, T. H. Buckle, Sir Charles Lyell, Thorold Rogers, Sir Samuel Baker, Kennan, Henry Lansdell, Adam Smith, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, Lecky, James Bryce, Sidney Webb, &c. (A specialty of the same firm are well-selected art productions for the ornamentation of the homes of the people.) These names in themselves offer suggestive evidence that Social Democracy is no mere negative movement, but one with which a great deal of the idealism of the German race must henceforth be identified.

An illusion largely shared in Germany itself is that her material prosperity is a direct outcome of the military successes of 1866 and 1870 and her subsequent unification. As a matter of fact, Imperialism has had little to do with the commercial

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and industrial rise of Germany. Of late it has even gratuitously fostered trade jealousies and other idiosyncrasies of a mischievous kind. Favouritism in high places has been the means of pitchforking unsuitable elements on to the boards of banks and great industrial concerns, instances of which are of common knowledge in German business circles.

Many years' connection with German manufacturing life have convinced me that, though the Empire may have supplied an effective trade "label," the real source of growth has been the inevitable outcome of modern economical developments of Europe as a whole taken advantage of, in spite of tariff walls and heavy taxation, by the industrious qualities of the race fostered by a century of education and careful industrial training. This is indirectly shown by the fact that small states like Belgium and Switzerland and some parts of Northern Italy have made even greater strides than some sections of Imperial Germany; whilst little, democratic Denmark has become one of the leading agricultural producers of the world. The expansion of the German mercantile navy, for instance, with the rise of Hamburg, finds a parallel in Belgium in the case of Antwerp, and both are directly traceable to the material *renaissance* of Europe as a whole.

Another feature which has contributed to German industrial expansion, which is rarely taken into serious account, without which, however, it would have been impossible, is the assistance the banks all over Germany and also in Austria have been to beginners in trade and manufactures. Here again intelligent enterprise, shrewdness, energy, and the careful appraising of the chances of success of the manufacturer of small means but of known integrity have had great results. The investment of money earned and saved is a special branch of German banking business, and, as a rule, it is attended to with great conscientiousness and a deep sense of its responsibility. Where we are inclined to run after "booms" and speculate, the small German capitalist rarely invests his savings without consulting his banker; with what results is strikingly evidenced by the vast amount of sound investments held by the large mass of

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the people. It is believed on the Continent that nothing is easier to obtain in wealthy England than money. It may be easy for the astute company promoter, but nowhere is it more difficult for a business man without ample means or unless in a large way of business to obtain credit, whatever be his reputation for honesty. The facilities given to people of small means but good reputation for obtaining credit from their bankers are much greater in Germany than with us. In Germany the energetic beginner often finds it so easy to obtain support from a banker that this is looked upon as quite a secondary consideration; the principal thing is to get orders and to deliver the goods: *Geld ist Nebensache* (money is a secondary matter). It is a well-known fact that German competition in the English colonies and also in South America, in Turkey, and in Egypt is intensified by the readiness of German traders to give extensions of credit which are unheard of in England. Added to this readiness to give credit must be placed a genius for taking pains over the smallest chance of doing business. This is shown in trifles; for instance, in the stationery business, in which we were once superior and are now most conservative, whilst in Germany novelties are continually being brought out. The spirit of enterprise is exemplified by the readiness to take up a new idea. The Germans have become almost Americanised in this direction, but their enterprise is allied to extraordinary caution; for the leading banks, with all their eagerness to support commerce and industry, have a staff of expert advisers at their disposal ever ready to look into new proposals and to detect folly and fraud.

Germany is passing through a period of transition, portending changes of perhaps greater magnitude than any which have taken place in our time. The fact that the signs thereof are not patent to outsiders is explained by two causes: the one inherent in the surface impressionism of our age, of which the daily newspaper is the faithful mirror; the other the blinding *prestige* of the military successes of 1870 which still hypnotises Europe, Germany included. It is not easy to detect the elusive signs of an evolution which may take a hundred and fifty years or

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more to materialise, but the inevitability of which is foreshadowed in the unreality of the present and the great changes which have already taken place within one generation. Only twenty-two years have passed since Bismarck retired, and it is generally admitted that were his methods revived they would not suffice to grapple with Germany's inner problems.

Many believe that Germany is on the verge of developments which can only be compared in their importance to the Reformation; and we know that over a hundred and thirty years elapsed between the day when Luther fixed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg (1517) and the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which first guaranteed liberty of thought on the Continent of Europe.

Progress in the world of ideas is gradual and takes time to shape itself. As an old German professor once said to me when estimating things in a critical spirit, "I give the Roman Catholic Church another four hundred years."

The conservative social instincts of the French nation, which have done so much to keep the French family and the faith of the country as a whole comparatively unchanged, in spite of the Revolution, are lacking in Germany. The veneration for the aristocracy, that potent support of monarchy with which we are so familiar in England, scarcely exists in Germany. Monarchical feeling, after rising under William I. to a height out of proportion to its previous traditions and *status*, is now again declining and is without that strong spiritual and mundane support of other days. At most that time-honoured attachment of the German tribes to their several ducal chieftains, some of them since dubbed kings by Habsburg or Napoleonic grace, may be expected to survive. How little this is realised in England is shown by the exaggerated interest taken in the every-day doings of personages in high places, which finds little echo either in the instincts of the German intellectual *élite* or with the Socialistic or Roman Catholic masses. August personages are not even referred to in Socialist newspapers in the whole course of the year. On the one hand we see sundry survivals of the spirit of the Middle Ages in out-of-

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the-way places, and a portion of the community living on from day to day on imaginary values, whilst there are increasing influences which are intent on abolishing these anachronisms.

The glamour of martial prowess and the power of intimidation which are its inevitable corollary have for the time being eclipsed the development of the individual, which had been steadily growing after the revolutionary year of 1848, but they have not been able to terrorise the Roman Catholic and the Socialist elements. Nothing could be more absurd than the prevalent illusion in England that, because the activity of the Socialists does not afford daily material for sensational telegrams from the "Special Correspondent," Socialism is impotent, passive, or inactive. Quite the contrary is the fact. Socialism is energetically active, and, often working in sympathy with the Catholic party, already exercises an immense influence on social legislation, and is superbly indifferent to the ephemera of the day. It is bent on restoring and enhancing the moral and intellectual worth of the individual, but as part of a collective mass consciousness on democratic Pantheistic lines. These elements possess the power to achieve this; for they alone are not to be intimidated, being immune from fear, and both are in deadly antagonism to the simulacra of the present day, the Roman Catholics adding their traditional deadly weapon of dissimulation to their arsenal of political fence. Features of great importance on the side of these forces of progress are those of education, particularly the training of the army, which has not only raised the pugnacity of the masses, but also added to their collective force by means of organisation. The capacity for organisation, which was originally fostered in the interest of the state for the furtherance of national defence, is now being turned by the people against those with whom they disagree. The lack of constructive political ability, with its genius for compromise, which has hitherto marked the German race, is likely to be compensated by the organisation of the educated, ably-led masses. Now that they are cognisant of their power, this capacity for collective disciplined action is bound to remain permanently with

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them and be an efficient weapon in their hands, even though they should, as every growing movement has done, change their aims and ideals from time to time.

In addition to this chaotic state of things there is the difficulty which the German race experiences to hold its own against the Pole, the Dane, the Slav, and the Italian to be taken into account. Germany is, indeed, passing through an initial period of expectancy, of probation, in which the slag, the dross, the after-birth of the Empire are disagreeably prominent. To have chosen such a moment to provoke the antagonism of the Anglo-Saxon by deliberately and demonstratively building a huge fleet was, of course, quite within Germany's right. Whether it was necessary for her honour or her safety, or otherwise to her advantage, is another matter, and only concerns themselves. To the writer it would seem to be one of those fateful happenings in the destiny of the German race of which its history affords so many pregnant instances.

In the very week in which Bismarck died (July 30, 1898) I received the following letter from that eminent divine, the late Dr. Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London. It refers more especially to the relations between England and the United States, but its spirit is equally applicable to England and Germany to-day :

“The future will not be so much concerned with nations as with the civilising ideas which they contribute to the world's progress. The question for us is, what will be the future of the civilising ideas which are common to English-speaking peoples? Local forms and modifications are of little moment. The important thing is the value of the ideas themselves. England and the United States have a common heritage of primary principles, which mark them off from other peoples. They are, as a matter of fact, indissolubly united. Proposals of closer friendship merely recognise this fact. Two peoples can help one another to understand better the principles which they already possess in common and apply them more freely to new questions as they arise.

“Both peoples must acquire greater sympathy, greater



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versatility, if they are to extend their civilising power. These are qualities which they can teach one another. The future of the world depends upon good understanding between England and the United States. If they cannot teach one another how are they to teach other peoples?"

In the meantime the jealousies and dissensions of the two great nations of Germanic blood are rejoicing the hearts of the Latin and the Slav. Here the hope of the future must lie in the political emancipation of the German people, which, once it comes into its own, will be in a position to command attention and cry a halt: "A plague on both your houses!"

In every case it should be impossible for an Englishman possessing a lifelong acquaintance with the many admirable features of German life, added to the conviction of the natural affinity of interests between the two nations, not to wish to see them allied in pursuit of some ennobling object. This community of ideas and action was exemplified for the last time during the *Kulturkampf* to which I have already referred. Let us hope that its next aim will be to join hands in fighting national prejudices, hallucinations, ignorance, dirt, destitution, and disease. Each nation should take its part in the common task to make this world somewhat more like what it might become for the majority of mankind. The German people seems destined to play a leading part in this direction; and its triumph would point to a peaceable evolution of ideas in lieu of war and revolution brought about by physical force.



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